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CONFOCAL OPTICAL APPARATUS.

ted from the light source and shaping it into a spot, an objective lens for converging the light passing through the first aperture portion on an object to be measured, a second aperture portion positioned on a plane conjugate with the surface of the object where the light falls, and an optical detector for detecting light passing through the second aperture portions. The first and second aperture portions are disposed

at the same position so that the same aperture can be shared. The detection surface of the optical detector is disposed in substantially the same plane as the shared aperture. In this way, the size and the weight of the apparatus can be reduced, measurement of a three-dimensional shape can be made at a high speed and highly accurately, and positioning of each portion can be made easily.

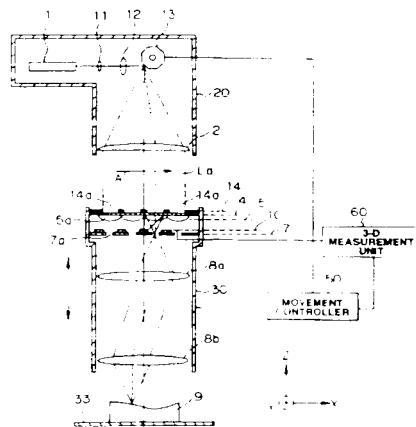


FIG.1

TECHNICAL FIELD

This invention relates to a three-dimensional shape measuring apparatus in which a confocal optical system is employed, and in particular relates to a confocal optical apparatus for performing three-dimensional measurements using a hologram or a diffraction grating-type half-mirror.

BACKGROUND ART

So-called confocal optical systems are apparatus for measuring distances. Figure 22 illustrates the principle of a confocal optical system.

In Figure 22, light from a light source 1 is condensed by a lens 12 and then directed toward a half-mirror 31 via a pinhole PH1 located at a focal point F1. The light from the light source 1 is transformed by the pinhole PH1 located at the focal point F1 into light equivalent to the a point source. Light reflected from the half-mirror 31 is condensed by a lens 8 and projected onto the surface of an object 9. Shown here is a case in which the surface of the object 9 is in the focal position F2 of the lens 8, and the object 9 is moved and scanned in the X-Y-Z direction by a three-dimensional moving stage 40. Light scattered on the surface of the object 9 passes through the lens 8, travels through the half-mirror 31, and converges toward a point F3 conjugate with the focal position of the light source 1. A pinhole PH2 is located in the position of this focal point F3, and transmitted light is detected by a light sensor 10.

With this structure, the focal point F3 on the conjugate point side moves when the object surface Z0 is shifted to the front or back (Z1 or Z2) of the focal position F2, as shown in Figures 23a and 23b, and the output of the light sensor 10 is markedly reduced by the action of the pinhole. Figure 24 illustrates the relation between the position of the object surface and the output of the light sensor 10.

This structure makes it possible to shift the measurement object 9 by the three-dimensional moving stage 40 in the direction of the Z axis (in the direction of the optical axis) for each X-Y coordinate position, to sample the output of the light sensor 10 in the course of this displacement, and to designate the detected Z position corresponding to the maximum sampling output as the surface

necessary to spend much time to detect the surface shape.

In view of this, an attempt was made in Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application 4-265918 to arrange the confocal optical system in two dimensions and to detect each object position in parallel; the corresponding structure is illustrated in Figure 25.

Specifically, with the apparatus illustrated in Figure 25 above, light from a light source 1 passes through lenses 12 and 2, becomes parallel light, and enters a pinhole array PHA1. The pinhole array PHA1 consists of pinholes arranged in a matrix. The light that has passed through the pinhole array PHA1 is transmitted through a half-mirror 31, condensed by lenses 8a and 8b, and projected onto a measurement object 9. The measurement object 9 is placed on top of a moving stage 35 capable of displacement in the direction of the Z axis. The light reflected by the measurement object 9 is condensed by the lenses 8a and 8b, reflected by the half-mirror 31, and imaged at a position conjugate with the pinhole array PHA1. A pinhole array PHA2 is located in the imaging position, and the light passing through the pinholes is detected by the individual light sensors 10 of a light sensor array.

This conventional structure makes it possible to separately sample the outputs of the individual light sensors 10 of the light sensor array while displacing the moving stage 35 in the direction of the Z axis, and to designate the detected Z-direction position corresponding to the maximum output of the individual light sensors as the surface position of the object 9.

Because this conventional technique dispenses with the need to move the moving stage in the XY direction, the measuring time can be reduced in comparison with the conventional mechanism illustrated in Figure 22 above.

Even with the apparatus illustrated in Figure 25, the moving stage 35 must be moved at a higher speed to further reduce the shape measurement time, but because the moving stage 35 must carry a measurement object, there is a limit to the high-speed movement. In other words, it is very difficult, for example, to use a high-speed moving stage to move a measurement object that is very heavy, a measurement object that has a very fine structure and thus cannot withstand the inertial

Measurement

A disadvantage of the conventional apparatus, however, is that each measurement instant yields

the same data for all the points of the object, so that the time required for the measurement is very long. To be able to measure the object at a high speed, however, the measuring

have a sturdy structure, and withstand the inertial force created by high-speed displacement. With the conventional technique illustrated in Figure 25, however, no measures related to high-speed movement have been adopted, thus making it likely that the confocal optical system will break or that other undesirable phenomena will occur during high-speed movement. In particular, it is important for a confocal optical system that the pinhole arrays **PHA1** and **PHA2** always remain in exact conjugate positions with respect to the half-mirror **31** so that the confocal optical system is always effective, but in the past there has been a limit to reconciling this requirement with a need for a reduction in size and weight.

In addition, a prismatic device was usually used as the half-mirror **31** in Figure 25, and because this prismatic device requires a cubic space, the focal position of the light source (pinhole array **PHA1**) and the light-receiving focal point (pinhole array **PHA2**) have to be located outside of the cubic space containing the half-mirror **31**, so it is impossible to make the distance between the lens **8a** and each of the focal points smaller than the length of the cube of the half-mirror **31**. In addition, the focal point of the light source of a confocal unit and the light-receiving focal point are located with respect to the half-mirror **31** at geometric distances that vary with each confocal unit. Thus, the conventional mechanism illustrated in Figure 25 has limits as to the reductions in size and weight, and requires precise alignment between the focal point of the light source and the light-receiving focal point.

An object of this invention, which was devised in view of the foregoing, is to provide a confocal optical apparatus in which the size and weight can be reduced, which allows three-dimensional shape measurements to be performed rapidly and accurately, and in which the alignment of each portion is facilitated.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

According to this invention, in a confocal optical apparatus comprising a light source, a first aperture portion for passing light emitted from this light source and obtaining a point source, an objective lens for causing the light that has passed through this first aperture portion to converge on a measurement object, a second aperture portion located on a plane conjugate with the convergence surface on this measurement object, and light detectors for detecting light that has passed through the second aperture portion, a distinctive feature is that the first and second aperture portions are located in the same position and are conjointly used as identical aperture portions, and the detection surfaces of the light detectors are located

substantially on the same surfaces as the conjointly used identical aperture portions.

This invention involves conjointly using the first and second apertures as identical apertures and positioning the detection surfaces of the light detectors on substantially the same surfaces with these identical apertures, thereby making it possible to facilitate accurate alignment of the first and second apertures and the light detectors, and to render the structures of these portions thin, compact, and sturdy.

In addition, according to this invention, a confocal optical apparatus comprises a light source, an optical element for receiving light from this light source and acting as a half-mirror and a diffraction grating, a first condensing device which is positioned in contact with or close to this optical element and which is designed for condensing zero-order light from the optical element, a pinhole for passing light condensed by this first condensing device, and a second condensing device for condensing the light that has passed through this pinhole and causing the light to converge toward a measurement object, and for causing the light scattered on the measurement object to converge toward the pinhole, in which the optical element directs toward the first condensing device the first-order diffracted light of the light reintroduced via the pinhole and the first condensing device; and which further comprises a light detector for receiving the first-order diffracted light condensed by the first condensing device.

Specifically, since the structure of this invention is such that the light-receiving focal point and the focal point of the light source of the confocal optical system are in the same position, it is sufficient to form a common pinhole at the two focal points in this position, making it possible to obtain a stable confocal effect, dispensing with the alignment of the two focal points, and allowing the apparatus to be made small and lightweight. In addition, the confocal optical system can be accommodated within a very thin region because the arrangement is aimed at obtaining the effect of a half-mirror and a diffraction grating using a flat-plate hologram, a flat-plate, diffraction grating-type half-mirror, or some other optical element.

Furthermore, according to this invention, a confocal optical apparatus comprises a parallel slit light generating device for generating parallel slit light undergoing sequential movable scanning, an aperture array in which a plurality of apertures for light passage are arranged in two dimensions and which is designed to direct the parallel slit light from the parallel light generating device, an optical element for receiving light that has passed through the aperture array and acting as a half-mirror and a diffraction grating, a lens array which is positioned

close to this optical element and which is composed of a plurality of two-dimensionally arranged lenses for condensing zero-order light from the optical element, a pinhole array comprising a plurality of two-dimensionally arranged pinholes for passing light condensed by each of the lenses of the lens array, and a condensing device for condensing the light that has passed through each pinhole and projecting the light onto a measurement object, and for causing the light scattered on the measurement object to converge toward each pinhole; in which the optical element directs toward the lens array the first-order diffracted light of the light reintroduced via each of the pinholes and the lens array; and which further comprises a light detector array comprising a plurality of two-dimensionally arranged light detectors for receiving the first-order diffracted light condensed by each of the lenses of the lens array, a movement control device for moving in the direction of the optical axis at least some of the parallel slit light generating device, aperture array, optical element, lens array, pinhole array, condensing device, and light detector array, and a three-dimensional distance measuring device for measuring the measurement object in three dimensions based on the output of each light detector in accordance with the movable scanning of the parallel slit light and with the movement control of the movement control device.

This invention involves directing parallel slit light toward a confocal optical system comprising two-dimensionally arranged apertures, lenses, pinholes, and light detectors, and receiving light reflected from a measurement object with the aid of the light detectors. The measurement object undergoes three-dimensional distance measurements based on the output of each light detector in accordance with the movable scanning of the parallel slit light and with the movable scanning of the movement control device.

Moreover, according to this invention, a confocal optical apparatus comprises a surface light ray generating device for generating surface light rays, an aperture array in which a plurality of apertures for light passage are arranged in two dimensions and which is designed to direct the surface light rays from the surface light ray generating device, an optical element for receiving light that has passed through the aperture array and acting as a half-mirror and a diffraction grating, a lens array for condensing the light onto a measurement object,

through each pinhole and projecting the light onto a measurement object, and for causing the light scattered on the measurement object to converge toward each pinhole, in which the optical element directs toward the lens array the first-order diffracted light of the light reintroduced via each of the pinholes and the lens array; and which further comprises a light detector array comprising a plurality of two-dimensionally arranged light detectors for receiving the first-order diffracted light condensed by each of the lenses of the lens array, a movement control device for moving in the direction of the optical axis at least some of the surface light ray generating device, aperture array, optical element, lens array, pinhole array, condensing device, and light detector array, and a three-dimensional distance measuring device for measuring the measurement object in three dimensions based on the output of each light detector in accordance with the movement control of the movement control device.

This invention involves directing surface light rays toward a confocal optical system comprising two-dimensionally arranged apertures, lenses, pinholes, and light detectors, and receiving light reflected from a measurement object with the aid of the light detectors. The measurement object undergoes three-dimensional distance measurements based on the output of each light detector in accordance with movable scanning by the movement control device.

The structure pertaining to this invention is thus aimed at obtaining results using pinholes that are in the same position as the light-receiving focal point and the light-source focal point of the confocal optical system, thus rendering the measuring device small, lightweight, and sturdy, adopting a structure in which all or part of the measurement device is movable results in rapid measurements, alignment, stability, measurement accuracy, and many other outstanding advantages.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a diagram illustrating a first embodiment of this invention.

Figure 2 is a diagram illustrating this invention in principle.

Figures 3a through 3c are diagrams illustrating the manner in which a hologram is exposed and read.

1. A light source, 2. An optical system for generating a parallel slit light, 3. An optical system for generating surface light rays, 4. An optical element, 5. An aperture array, 6. A lens array, 7. A measurement object, 8. A pinhole array, 9. A condensing device, 10. A light detector array, 11. A movement control device, 12. A three-dimensional distance measuring device.

1. A light source, 2. An optical system for generating a parallel slit light, 3. An optical system for generating surface light rays, 4. An optical element, 5. An aperture array, 6. A lens array, 7. A measurement object, 8. A pinhole array, 9. A condensing device, 10. A light detector array, and other components.

Figures 6a through 6j are a flow chart illustrating an example of a manufacturing sequence for a light detector array and a pinhole array.

Figures 7a through 7k are a flow chart illustrating another manufacturing sequence for a light detector array and a pinhole array.

Figures 8a through 8j are a flow chart illustrating another manufacturing sequence for a light detector array and a pinhole array.

Figure 9 is a diagram illustrating an example of a drive circuit for a light detector array.

Figure 10 is a time chart showing each of the signals of the drive circuit.

Figure 11 is a diagram illustrating a second embodiment of this invention.

Figure 12 is a diagram illustrating a third embodiment of this invention.

Figure 13 is a diagram illustrating a fourth embodiment of this invention.

Figure 14 is a diagram illustrating the diffraction grating-type half-mirror used in the fourth embodiment.

Figure 15 is a cross section illustrating other structures adopted for a hologram, lens array, light detector array, and other components.

Figures 16a through 16m are a flow chart illustrating an example of a manufacturing sequence for the structure of Figure 15.

Figure 17 is a cross section illustrating other structures adopted for a hologram, lens array, light detector array, and other components.

Figure 18 is a cross section illustrating other structures adopted for a hologram, lens array, light detector array, and other components.

Figures 19a and 19b are diagrams illustrating a fifth embodiment of this invention.

Figure 20 is a diagram illustrating an example of another structure of a drive circuit for the light detector array.

Figure 21 is a diagram illustrating an example of another structure of a drive circuit for the light detector array.

Figure 22 is a diagram illustrating the principle of a confocal optical system.

Figures 23a and 23b are diagrams illustrating the manner in which the focal point of a confocal optical system is shifted.

Figure 24 is a diagram illustrating the output of a light sensor in relation to the distance between the object surface and the lens.

Figure 25 is a diagram illustrating an example of a conventional three-dimensional shape measuring instrument using a confocal optical system.

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

This invention will now be described in detail through the embodiments shown in the accompanying drawings.

Figure 2 illustrates the basic structure of this invention.

In Figure 2, laser light (or monochromatic light based on the laser light) emitted from a light source 1 is transformed into parallel light 3 by a lens 2 and directed toward a reflection hologram 4. The reflection hologram 4, which acts as a half-mirror and a diffraction grating, is exposed to the parallel light that forms an angle Φ with the direction of the optical axis, as shown in Figure 3a. When parallel light, which is shown by the solid lines in Figure 3b, is incident on the hologram 4 developed, for example, to a diffraction efficiency of 40%, the respective intensities of zero-order light (chain line) and first-order light (broken line) will be 60% and 40% of the incident light. In addition, the respective intensities of zero-order light and first-order light will be 60% and 40% of the incident light when, as shown in Figure 3c, this hologram is irradiated with parallel light opposite in direction to that shown in Figure 3b.

In Figure 2, the hologram 4 is irradiated with parallel light in the same direction as in Figure 3b, and the resulting zero-order light is made to converge toward the focal position 6 by a lens 5 adjacent to the reflection hologram 4. A pinhole 7 is located in this focal position 6, and light passes through the hole of the pinhole 7. The light that has passed through the pinhole 7 is again condensed by a lens 8 and is directed toward a measurement object 9. Light reflected from the measurement object 9 is again condensed by the lens 8 and again passes through the pinhole 7. The light that has passed through the pinhole 7 is condensed by the lens 5 and is directed toward the hologram 4 assuming the form of parallel light opposite in direction to that of the parallel light 3 emitted from the light source. As shown in Figure 3c, the first-order diffracted light of the parallel light incident on the hologram 4 is reflected at an angle Φ and condensed by the lens 5. A light detector 10 is installed in this convergence position, and the luminous energy of the incident light is detected by the light detector 10.

Specifically, with this system, the focal position on the light source side of the confocal optical system and the focal position on the light-receiving side are one and the same position 6, and a common pinhole 7 can be used. A stable confocal effect can therefore be obtained, and the conventional alignment between the focal point of the light source and the light-receiving focal point becomes

unnecessary. In addition, the fact that the reflection hologram 4 functions as a half-mirror makes it possible to implement the miniaturization (flattening) and weight reduction unattainable with conventional structures.

Figure 1 illustrates a first embodiment of this invention; the apparatus comprises a fixed portion 20 and a movable portion 30 that travels in the direction of the optical axis (Z direction).

Laser light emitted from a laser light source 1 is transformed into slit parallel light by lenses 11 and 12, and is deflected by a polyhedral rotating mirror 13. The deflected slit parallel light is directed toward a telecentrically located cylindrical lens 2, is deflected in the direction of the optical axis, and is sequentially scanned in the direction shown by the arrow A in the figure by the rotation of the polyhedral rotating mirror 13. The polyhedral rotating mirror 13 is rotated and scanned by a movement controller 50. Parallel slit light La scanned in the A direction is thus sequentially introduced from the fixed portion 20 into the movable portion 30.

It is also possible to use a galvano-mirror instead of the polyhedral rotating mirror 13, as it is to perform uniform scanning using an f-θ lens instead of the cylindrical lens 2.

An aperture array 14 in which apertures 14a for effectively directing light toward the individual lens 5a of a lens array 5 are formed at positions corresponding to the individual lenses is installed at the entrance pupil of the movable portion 30, and a reflection hologram 4 acting as a half-mirror and diffraction grating is installed underneath. The reflection hologram 4 functions in the same manner as the holograms shown in Figures 2 and 3 above. The physical relationship between the upper and lower reflection hologram 4 and aperture array 14 may be reversed.

The lens array 5 is positioned close to or in contact with the reflection hologram 4 underneath the reflection hologram 4, and the zero-order light of the light incident on the hologram 4 is made to converge toward the focal position of each lens 5a. The pinholes 7a of a pinhole array 7 are located in the focal positions of the lenses 5a, and each of these condensed light rays passes through the pinholes 7a. The parallel slit light rays are made narrower than the pitch of the lenses 5a comprising the lens array 5.

Figure 2 illustrates the measurement object 9 in a first embodiment when the movable portion 30 has been moved in the direction of the optical axis (Z axis).

Light scattered on the measurement object 9 is condensed by the lenses 8b and 8a, passed through the pinhole array 7 having a confocal effect, directed toward the lens array 5, and forced by the lenses 5a of the lens array 5 to strike the reflection hologram 4 in the direction coinciding with that shown in Figure 3c, assuming the form of parallel light opposite in direction to the slit parallel light exiting from the lens 2. The first-order diffracted light rays of the reflection hologram 4 again strike the individual lenses 5a of the lens array 5 and converge at the respective angles Φ . A light detector array 10 is installed in such a way that individual light detectors 10a are located in each of these convergence positions.

This structure involves fixedly installing a measurement object 9 on a suitable table 33. Meanwhile, the movable portion 30 is moved by a movement controller 50 in the direction of the optical axis (Z axis) in synchronism with the rotational scanning performed by the polyhedral rotating mirror 13. A three-dimensional measurement unit 60 sequentially samples the outputs of individual detectors 10a of the light detector array 10 during the movement of the movable portion 30, and the Z position detected when each of the outputs reaches a maximum is designated as the position of the object surface.

In addition, the aperture array 14, reflection hologram 4, lens array 5, light detector array 10, and pinhole array 7 of this structure are formed into a flat assembly by a semiconductor process, as shown in Figures 4 and 5.

Specifically, the aperture array 14 in Figures 4 and 5 consists of a shielding plate, and apertures 14a are formed in this plate at positions corresponding to each of the lenses 5a. The shielding film of the aperture array 14 is formed, for example, by sputtering a three-layer $\text{Cr}_2\text{O}_3/\text{Cr}/\text{Cr}_2\text{O}_3$ film. Light reflected by the chromium contained in the intermediate layer of the three-layer film is subjected to multiple reflection and decay by the Cr_2O_3 film.

A planar microlens (PML) may be used in this case as the lens array 5. With a planar microlens, multiple lens 5a portions are fabricated by creating a refractive index distribution through the selective dispersion of ions within a flat glass substrate 5. A nonreflective coating is applied to the light-admitting portion of each lens portion 5a of the lens

array 5. The aperture array 14 is formed on the same substrate 5. If heat resistance is a problem during the manufacture of the hologram 4, it is permissible to form the aperture array 14 on a separate substrate.

of the lens array 5 and then to bond the exposed and developed hologram 4 on top of this.

In addition, a light detector array 10 and pinhole array 7 are formed at a pitch corresponding to the lens pitch of the lens array 5 on a planar glass substrate 15 in which a nonreflective coating is formed on the surface bonded to the glass substrate 5.

This portion is formed by aligning and bonding the planar glass substrate 15 (in which the light detector array 10 and pinhole array 7 have been formed) with the glass substrate 5 (in which the aperture array 14, hologram 4, and lens array 5 have been formed).

When the microlens substrate 5 and the glass sensor substrate 15 are bonded, the space between the two is filled with a transparent refractive liquid that has substantially the same refractive index as glass, making it possible to prevent irregular reflection from occurring at the interface between these substrates.

Similarly, when the microlens substrate 5 and the hologram 4 are bonded, the space between the two is filled with a transparent refractive liquid that has substantially the same refractive index as glass, making it possible to prevent irregular reflection from occurring at the interface between these substrates.

Figures 6a through 6j illustrate the process for manufacturing the pinhole array 7 and light detector array 10. The details of the process will now be described in accordance with the manufacturing sequence

- (a) Planar glass substrate 15
- (b) A transparent conductive film (TCO) 16 is formed on the planar glass substrate 15. SnO_2 or the like is used for the TCO.
- (c) Except for the light detector element portions 17 and pinhole portions 18, everything is removed from the transparent conductive film 16 by, for example, etching or the like. The purpose of retaining the transparent conductive film of the pinhole portions in this process is to prevent the glass of the aperture portions of the pinholes from being abraded by the etching of the subsequent process (g).
- (d) Amorphous silicon 19 is formed on top of this.
- (e) The pinhole portions 18 of the amorphous silicon 19 are removed using etching or the like.
- (f) A nickel film 21 is formed.
- (g) Except for the light detector element portions 17 and pinhole portions 18, everything is removed from the nickel film 21 by, for example, etching or the like. Each pinhole aperture is also formed by etching.
- (h) A transparent insulating film 24 is formed on this overcoat.

- (i) A nickel film 25 is then formed.
- (j) The pinhole portions 26 of the nickel film 25 are formed by etching.

Light detection elements comprising amorphous silicon 19, transparent anode electrodes 17, and metal cathode electrodes 22 are formed by this series of treatments, and pinhole shielding portions are formed from the nickel films 23 and 25.

Figures 7a through 7k illustrate another manufacturing method. The details of this method will now be described in accordance with the manufacturing sequence.

- (a) Planar glass substrate 15
- (b) A transparent conductive film (TCO) 16 is formed on the planar glass substrate 15.
- (c) Except for the light detector element portions 17 and pinhole portions 18, everything is removed from the transparent conductive film 16 by, for example, etching or the like. The purpose of retaining the transparent conductive film of the pinhole portions in this process is to prevent the glass of the aperture portions of the pinholes from being abraded by the etching of the subsequent processes (e) and (k).
- (d) Amorphous silicon 19 is formed on top of this.
- (e) The pinhole portions 18 of the amorphous silicon 19 are removed using etching or the like.
- (f) A nickel film 21 is formed.
- (g) Except for the light detector element portions 22, everything is removed from the nickel film 21 by, for example, etching or the like.
- (h) An insulating film 24 is formed on this overcoat.
- (i) The insulating film 24, amorphous silicon 19, and pinhole portions 27 are removed by etching or the like.
- (j) A nickel film 25 is then formed.
- (k) The pinhole 26 portions of the nickel film 25 are removed by etching to form pinholes.

Light detection elements comprising amorphous silicon 19, transparent anode electrodes 17, and metal cathode electrodes 22 are formed by this series of treatments, and a pinhole shielding portion is formed from the nickel film 25.

Figures 8a through 8j illustrate yet another manufacturing method. The details of this method will now be described in accordance with the manufacturing sequence.

- (a) Planar glass substrate 15
- (b) A transparent conductive film (TCO) 16 is formed on the planar glass substrate 15.
- (c) Except for the light detector element portions 17 and pinhole portions 18, everything is removed from the transparent conductive film 16 by, for example, etching or the like. The purpose of retaining the transparent conductive film

of the pinhole portions in this process is to prevent the glass of the aperture portions of the pinholes from being abraded by the etching of the subsequent process (j).

- (d) Amorphous silicon 19 is formed on top of this.
- (e) A nickel film 21 is formed.
- (f) Except for the light detector element portions 22, everything is removed from the nickel film 21 by, for example, etching or the like.
- (g) An insulating film 24 is formed on this overcoat.
- (h) The pinhole portions 27 are removed from the insulating film 24 by etching or the like.
- (i) A nickel film 25 is then formed.
- (j) The pinhole portions 28 of the nickel film 25 and amorphous silicon 19 are removed by etching to form pinholes.

Light detection elements comprising amorphous silicon 19, transparent anode electrodes 17, and metal cathode electrodes 22 are formed by this series of treatments, and a pinhole shielding portion is formed from the nickel film 25. Specifically, this manufacturing method allows the pinhole portions of the nickel film 25 and amorphous silicon 19 to be removed simultaneously by the process (j) etching.

Figure 9 illustrates a light detector array 10 composed of $n \times m$ light detectors S11 through Smn, and a circuit structure for reading the signals from these light detectors S11 through Smn. For odd columns, the light detectors in each row are connected to an analog multiplexer M1 by a common connecting line, and for even columns, the light detectors in each row are connected to an analog multiplexer M2 by a common line. The hatched light detectors E1 through Em are designed to generate read timing signals VD1 and VD2 for column units, and a light detector F is designed to output timing signals FD for starting a read scan cycle.

The area inside the broken line in Figure 9 is irradiated at a certain point in time by the parallel slit light La in Figure 1, and the irradiated area is movably scanned in the direction of arrow A by performing a scanning procedure using a polyhedral rotating mirror. Specifically, parallel slit light is alternately and movably scanned in the direction from the odd columns toward the even columns; signals detected by the light detectors of the odd

is therefore possible to position light detectors close to each other, to reduce the surface area of the shielding portion of the aperture array 14, and to miniaturize the structure of this portion.

In Figure 9, the hatched light detectors E1 through Em for generating timing signals are located in the matrix positions designated for the pinholes 7 at the ends of the light detector matrix, and are directly irradiated by the parallel slit light La from the fixed portion 20. Signals VD1 are designed to determine the read timing of the odd columns, and signals VD2 are designed to determine the read timing of the even columns. In addition, a light detector F for generating read start timing signals FD is located, for example, in a matrix position designated for the pinhole 7 at the opposite end with respect to the light detector E1 of the first column.

Figure 10 illustrates the timing signals FD, VD1, and VD2, as well as the timing of the output signals V1 and V2 from the multiplexer M1 and M2. In this case, the light detectors S11 through Smn function as a charge storage device, acting in such a way that the detector output of an odd column is read based on the fall of VD1, and the detector output of an even column is read based on the fall of VD2. This circuit structure therefore operates in such a way that while light is incident on the detectors of an odd column, the operation alternates between reading the detector output of an even column that contains an already stored charge and performing a reverse procedure.

It is also possible to use a charge transfer method in which CCD camera sensors are used instead of the multiplexes M1 and M2.

It is also possible with this circuit to read the detector output of an even column by delaying the signal VD1 and using this delayed signal as a trigger, and to read the detector output of an odd column by delaying the signal VD2 and using this delayed signal as a trigger. Another alternative is to delay the respective rises of the signals VD1 and VD2, and to read the output of each detector with the aid of these delayed signals.

Figure 11 illustrates another embodiment of this invention. In this case, parallel-plane light rays Lb of a nonscanning type are used instead of slit parallel light of the scanning type, as in the embodiment in Figure 1 above. In addition, the movable portion 30 consists of a lens 8a alone, and all of the other parts are the same as in the fixed portion 20.

This structure allows the two types of signals to be read independently for each column even when irradiation is performed using incident parallel slit light rays Lb.

Parallel-plane light rays

Specifically, laser light emitted from a laser light source 1 is transformed into parallel-plane light rays Lb by lenses 12 and 13, and the

directed toward an aperture array 14. Light that has passed through the apertures of the aperture array 14 is caused to converge toward a measurement object 9 in the same manner as above via a hologram 4, lens array 5, a pinhole array 7, and lenses 8a and 8b. Light scattered on the measurement object 9 passes through the lenses 8a and 8b, pinhole array 7, and lens array 5, strikes the hologram 4, and enters the detectors of a light detector array 10 after being diffracted by the hologram 4.

Because parallel-plane light rays Lb are used in this case, the return light of the parallel-plane light rays Lb enters all the detectors of the light detector array 10 simultaneously.

Since this embodiment involves constructing the movable portion 30 from the lens 8b alone, the weight of moving parts can be reduced, and the structure for performing movable scanning can be simplified.

Even when parallel-plane light rays Lb are used in the manner shown in Figure 11, the portion underneath the aperture array 14 (aperture array 14, hologram 4, lens array 5, light detector array 10, pinhole array 7, and lenses 8a and 8b) may be constructed as a movable portion, as shown in Figure 1 above. It is also possible to configure all the structural elements (except for the measurement object 9) in Figure 11 in the form of a movable portion 30.

Figure 12 shows yet another embodiment of this invention. The entire apparatus is configured as a movable portion 30 in this case. In addition, a laser light source array 40 in which a plurality of laser elements are arranged in a matrix is used as the light source for generating surface light rays. This laser light source array is known as the array-type surface light generation semiconductor laser of Photonics Research Incorporated. In addition, a lens array 50 is used as the lens for converting into parallel light the light rays that are output by the array-type surface light generation semiconductor laser 40. The other structures are the same as in the embodiment of Figure 1 or 11, and structural elements performing the same functions are assigned identical symbols.

Specifically, in Figure 12, laser light emitted from the laser light source 40 is transformed into parallel-plane light rays by the lens array 50, and is directed toward an aperture array 14. Light that has passed through the apertures of the aperture array 14 is caused to converge toward a measurement object 9 in the same manner as above via a hologram 4, lens array 5, pinhole array 7, and lenses 8a and 8b. Light scattered on the measurement object 9 passes through the lenses 8a and 8b, pinhole array 7, and lens array 5, strikes the hologram 4, and enters the detectors of a light

detector array 10 after being diffracted by the hologram 4.

This embodiment also allows the array-type surface light generation laser 40 to emit light sequentially in column units and to function as slit light, as in the embodiment illustrated in Figure 1 above.

Figure 13 illustrates still another embodiment of this invention. In this embodiment, a diffraction grating-type half-mirror 41 such as that shown in Figure 14 is used instead of the reflection hologram 4 used in the aforementioned embodiments, and a quarter-wave plate 42 is interposed between the lenses 8a and 8b. The quarter-wave plate 42 in Figure 13 can be located in any position as long as it is in the optical path of the confocal optical system.

The diffraction grating-type half-mirror 41 acts as a half-mirror and a diffraction grating in the same manner as the aforementioned reflection hologram 4, and is described in Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application 61-17103. Specifically, transparent members 43 and 44 of substantially the same refractive index are provided with a plurality of inclined surfaces, a polarization-dependent reflective film 45 is formed on these inclined surfaces, yielding a relief-type diffraction grating, and the assembly is supported by two parallel flat plates 46 and 47 on both sides. The reflective film 45 is configured in such a way that its transmittance is approximately 100% with respect to P polarized light and its reflectivity is approximately 100% with respect to S polarized light.

When, therefore, a P polarized wave is emitted from the light source 1 using a laser with linear polarization characteristics, the P polarized wave strikes the diffraction grating-type half-mirror 41, and almost all the wave passes through. This P polarized wave then passes through the quarter-wave plate 42, becomes circularly polarized light, and is caused to converge on the measurement object 9 by an object lens 8b. Light reflected from the measurement object 9 becomes an S polarized wave as a result of passing through the quarter-wave plate 42, strikes the diffraction grating-type half-mirror 41 via a lens 8a and pinhole 7, reflects from the reflective film 45 of the half-mirror 41, and enters a light detector 10.

The embodiment illustrated in Figure 2, 11, or 12 above also allows a diffraction grating-type half-mirror 41 such as that shown in Figure 14 to be used instead of the hologram 4. It is apparent that a quarter-wave plate 42 is installed in the optical path of the confocal optical system.

Next, Figure 15 illustrates a modified embodiment of the sheet-shape optical instrument portion shown in Figure 5 above. Here, the microlens array 5 and light detector array 10 are bonded instead of

the microlens array 5 and glass substrate 15, as was the case in Figure 5 above.

Specifically, the function of the light detector array 10 and the function of the pinhole array 7 are performed with the aid of a structure comprising an upper shielding film 51, a lower shielding film 52, and upper insulating film 53, a lower insulating film 54, an upper electrode 55, a lower electrode 56, and a light detector portion 57. These structural portions are bonded to the microlens array 5 by a refractive index adjusting solution 58 or the like.

Figures 16a through 16m illustrate the process for manufacturing the pinhole array 7 and light detector array 10 of the structure shown in Figure 15. The details of the process will now be described in accordance with the manufacturing sequence.

- (a) Planar glass substrate 15
- (b) A lower shielding film 52 is formed on the planar glass substrate 15.
- (c) A pinhole array 7A is formed on the lower shielding film 52.
- (d) A lower insulating film 54 is formed on top of this.
- (e) A lower electrode 56 is further formed as a film on top of this.
- (f) The pattern of the lower electrode 56 is formed.
- (g) The light detector portion (amorphous silicon) 57 is further formed as a film on top of this.
- (h) A pinhole array 7B is formed on the light detector portion 57.
- (i) The upper electrode 55 is formed as a film.
- (j) The pattern of the upper electrode 55 is formed.
- (k) The upper insulating film 53 is formed as a film.
- (l) The upper shielding film 51 is formed as a film.
- (m) A pinhole array 7C is formed on the upper shielding film 51, as is the opening portion 7D of the light detector

Next, Figure 17 illustrates an embodiment in which the light detector portion 57 is made not of amorphous silicon but of a single crystal silicon semiconductor, and the structural elements performing the same functions as in Figure 15 are assigned identical symbols.

Specifically, an SiO_2 film is formed in this case on both surfaces of a silicon substrate using ther-

lens array 5 with the aid of a refractive index adjusting solution 58. Silicon and a microlens array may also be directly joined using a lamination SOI technique during bonding with the microlens. It is also possible to replace the single crystal silicon with a III-V group semiconductor or other material capable of photoelectric transfer. In addition, the upper electrode 55 and the lower electrode 56 may be sandwiched, as in the embodiment shown in Figure 15 or 17, or they may be formed within the same plane, as shown in Figure 18.

Next, Figure 19a illustrates yet another modified example of the sheet-shape optical instrument portion shown in Figure 5 or 15. Figure 19b is a plan view of an annular light detector 10a.

Specifically, Figures 19a and 19b show a case in which the function of the half-mirror can be performed by a half-mirror coating film 59 and in which light reflected by the half-mirror film 59 can be detected by making the light detector array 10 annular in shape.

In the structure shown in Figures 19a and 19b, light from a light source is passed through an aperture array 14 formed in a shielding film, condensed by the microlenses of the microlens array 5, and transmitted through pinholes 7a formed in a glass substrate 15. Light reflected by a measurement object passes through the pinholes 7a, reflects from the half-mirror coating film 59, and enters the annular light detector 10a.

The annular light detector 10 and the pinhole array 7 are formed on the glass substrate 15 by a semiconductor process.

Figure 20 illustrates a modified embodiment of a circuit structure for reading the signals of each of the detectors of the light detector array 10 shown in Figure 9 above. In this case, each of the detectors is divided into four blocks.

Specifically, light detectors in the $(4n - 3)$ column are connected to an analog multiplexer **M1**; light detectors in the $(4n - 2)$ column, to an analog multiplexer **M2**; light detectors in the $(4n - 1)$ column, to an analog multiplexer **M3**; and light detectors in the $4n$ column, to an analog multiplexer **M4**. The number of divisions is increased in comparison with the previous embodiment involving division into two parts, making it possible to increase the speed at which signals are read.

The analog multiplexers may be connected to the light detector array by wire bonding or the like.

The light detector array is formed by a photolithography and dry-etching technology. The light detector array having pins

Next, Figure 24 illustrates a circuit for reading signals from a light detector array irradiated with

possible in this case to adopt an X-Y address system in which transistors and other switching elements are incorporated into the light detector array. A charge transfer system may be adopted for the read mode.

The measurement object 9 was fixed in the embodiments shown in Figures 1, 11, and 12, although it is also possible to adopt a movable structure in which the measurement object 9 is placed on an X-Y moving stage, and measurements are conducted by suitably varying the measurement object field. In addition, higher-resolution measurements can be performed by adopting a structure in which this X-Y moving stage or movable portion 30 can be microscopically displaced in the X-Y direction.

The embodiments shown in Figures 1, 11, and 12 also allow all the measurement instruments to be fixed and three-dimensional measurements to be performed by movably scanning the measurement object 9 in three-dimensional directions.

Although only one example of the structure of the confocal optical system was described, other structures may also be adopted as long as they can perform the same functions as the embodiments.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

This invention can be used as a three-dimensional measurement apparatus for measuring the shape of a measurement object in three dimensions.

Claims

1. A confocal optical apparatus comprising:
 - a light source;
 - a first aperture portion for passing therethrough light emitted from the light source and obtaining a point source;
 - an objective lens for causing the light that has passed through the first aperture portion to converge on a measurement object;
 - a second aperture portion located on a plane conjugate with the convergence surface on the measurement object; and
 - a light detector for detecting light that has passed through the second aperture portion,
 characterized in that the first and second aperture portions are located in the same position and are conjointly used as an identical aperture portion, and a detection surface of the light detector is located substantially on the same surface as the conjointly used identical aperture portion.

2. A confocal optical apparatus comprising:
 - a light source;
 - an optical element for receiving light from the light source and acting as a half-mirror and a diffraction grating;
 - first condensing means positioned in contact with or close to the optical element, for condensing zero-order light from the optical element;
 - a pinhole for passing light condensed by the first condensing means; and
 - second condensing means for condensing the light that has passed through the pinhole and causing the light to converge toward a measurement object, and for causing the light scattered on the measurement object to converge toward the pinhole,
 wherein the optical element directs first-order diffracted light of the light reintroduced toward the first condensing means via the pinhole and the first condensing means, and
 - wherein the confocal optical apparatus further comprises a light detector for receiving the first-order diffracted light condensed by the first condensing means.
3. A confocal optical apparatus comprising:
 - parallel slit light generating means for generating parallel slit light undergoing sequential movable scanning;
 - an aperture array comprising a plurality of apertures for light passage arranged in two dimensions, for passing therethrough the parallel slit light from the parallel light generating means;
 - an optical element for receiving the light that has passed through the aperture array and acting as a half-mirror and a diffraction grating;
 - a lens array positioned close to the optical element and comprising a plurality of two-dimensionally arranged lenses for condensing zero-order light from the optical element;
 - a pinhole array comprising a plurality of two-dimensionally arranged pinholes for passing therethrough light condensed by each of the lenses of the lens array; and
 - condensing means for condensing the light that has passed through each of the pinholes and projecting the light onto a measurement object, and for causing the light scattered on the measurement object to converge toward each of the pinholes,
 wherein the optical element directs toward the lens array first-order diffracted light of the light reintroduced via each of the pinholes and the lens array; and
 - wherein the confocal optical apparatus further comprises

5 a light detector array comprising a plurality of two-dimensionally arranged light detectors for receiving the first-order diffracted light condensed by each of the lenses of the lens array; movement control means for moving in the direction of the optical axis at least some of the parallel slit light generating means, aperture array, optical element, lens array, pinhole array, condensing means, and light detector array; and

10 a three-dimensional distance measuring means for measuring the measurement object in three dimensions based on the output of each light detector in accordance with the movable scanning of the parallel slit light and with the movement control of the movement control means

15 4. A confocal optical apparatus as defined in claim 3, characterized in that the aperture array, optical element, lens array, pinhole array, and light detector array are of laminated structure.

20 5. A confocal optical apparatus as defined in claim 3, wherein the light detectors of the light detector array are arranged in a two-dimensional matrix, these detectors are divided into a plurality of blocks, and the light detectors of each block are connected by a common connecting wire to ensure connection to a common signal extraction circuit for each block.

25 6. A confocal optical apparatus as defined in claim 3, characterized in that the three-dimensional distance measuring means sequentially reads the detection signals of the light detectors in block units in the course of the movable scanning of the parallel slit light

30 7. A confocal optical apparatus comprising: a surface light ray generating means for generating surface light rays; an aperture array comprising a plurality of apertures for light passage arranged in two dimensions, for passing them through the surface light rays from the surface light ray generating means;

35 an optical element for receiving light that has passed through the aperture array and acting as a half-mirror and as a lens array;

40 8. A confocal optical apparatus as defined in claim 7, characterized in that the aperture array, optical element, lens array, pinhole array, and light detector array are of laminated structure.

45 9. A confocal optical apparatus as defined in claim 7, wherein the surface light ray generating means is a light source array in which a plurality of light generating elements are arranged in a matrix.

50 10. An optical apparatus which comprises:

45 an aperture array comprising a plurality of apertures for light passage arranged in two dimensions;

55 an optical element acting as a half-mirror and a diffraction grating;

60 a lens array comprising a plurality of two-dimensionally arranged lenses for condensing light that has passed through each of the ap-

eratures of the aperture array; and a light detector array comprising a plurality of two-dimensionally arranged detectors for passing the light that has been condensed by the lens array to the light detector array.

the lens array; and

a condensing means for condensing the light that has passed through each pinhole and projecting the light onto a measurement object, and for causing the light scattered on the measurement object to converge toward each pinhole,

which in the optical element directs toward the lens array first-order diffracted light of the light reintroduced via each of the pinholes and the lens array; and

wherein the confocal optical apparatus further comprises:

a light detector array comprising a plurality of two-dimensionally arranged light detectors for receiving the first-order diffracted light condensed by each of the lenses of the lens array;

movement control means for moving in the direction of the optical axis at least some of the surface light ray generating means, aperture array, optical element, lens array, pinhole array, condensing means, and light detector array, and

a three-dimensional distance measuring means for measuring the measurement object in three dimensions based on the output of each light detector in accordance with the movement control of the movement control means.

30 8. A confocal optical apparatus as defined in claim 7, characterized in that the aperture array, optical element, lens array, pinhole array, and light detector array are of laminated structure.

35 9. A confocal optical apparatus as defined in claim 7, wherein the surface light ray generating means is a light source array in which a plurality of light generating elements are arranged in a matrix.

40 10. An optical apparatus which comprises:

45 an aperture array comprising a plurality of apertures for light passage arranged in two dimensions;

50 an optical element acting as a half-mirror and a diffraction grating;

55 a lens array comprising a plurality of two-dimensionally arranged lenses for condensing light that has passed through each of the ap-

eratures of the aperture array; and a light detector array comprising a plurality of two-dimensionally arranged light detectors for passing the light that has been condensed by the lens array to the light detector array.

for the light reflected by the optical element for the light reintroduced into each of the pinholes of the pinhole array.

wherein these aperture array, optical element, lens array, pinhole array, and light detector array are of laminated structure. 5

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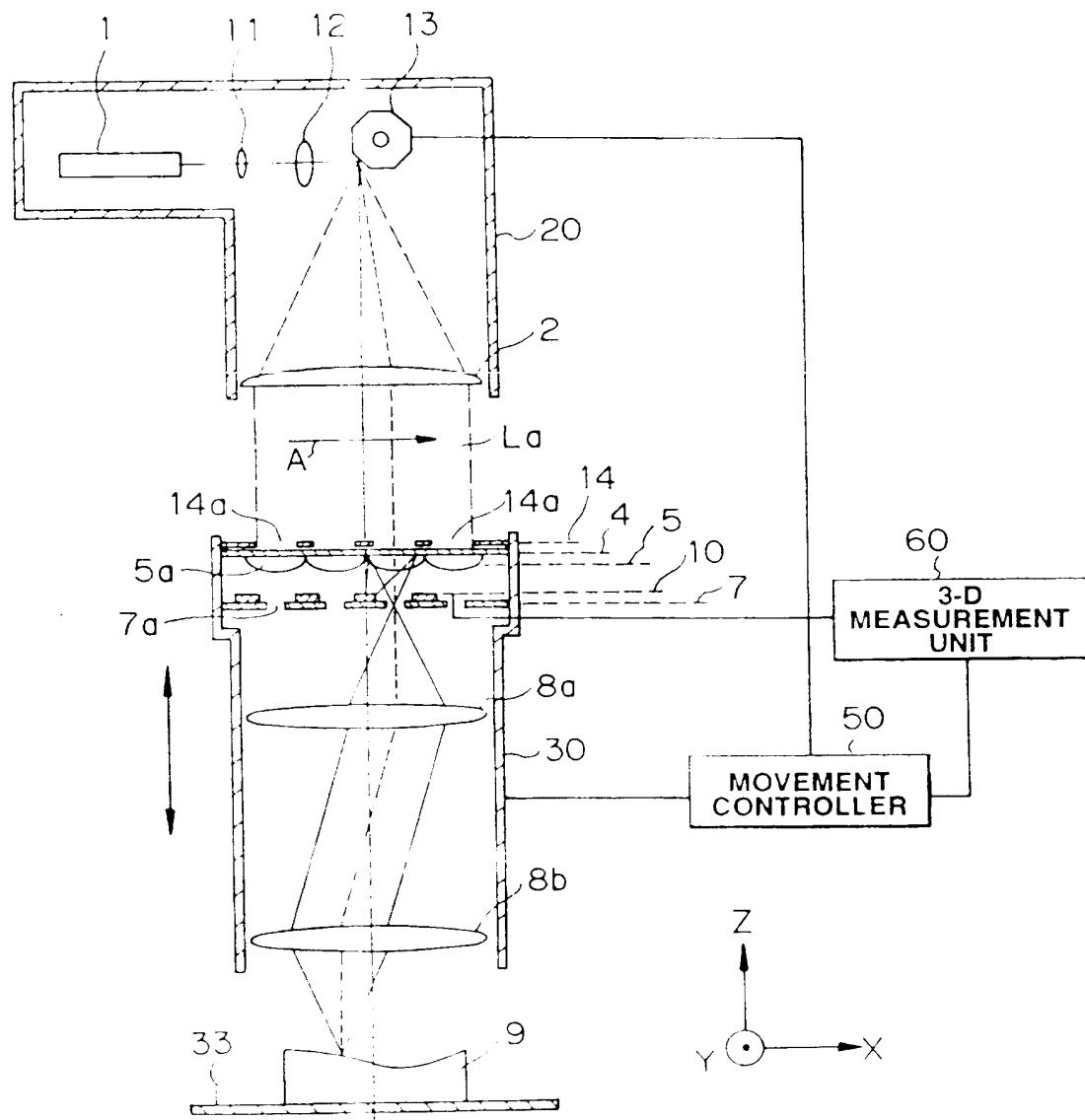
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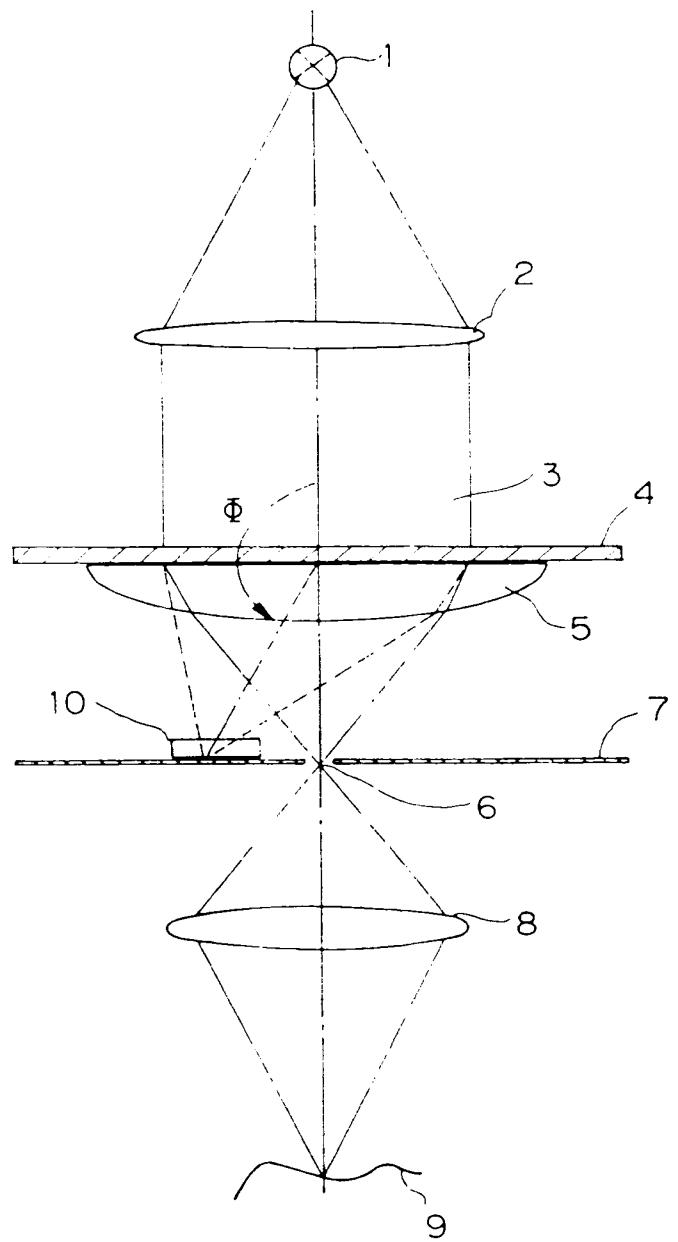


FIG.2

FIG.3(a)

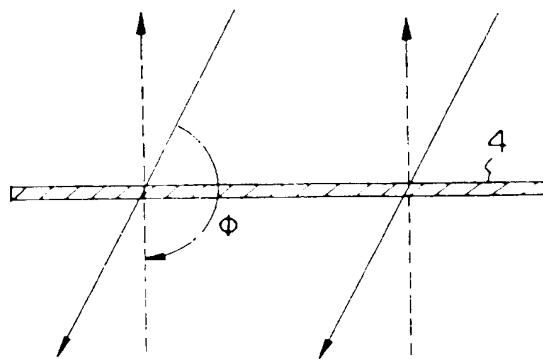


FIG.3(b)

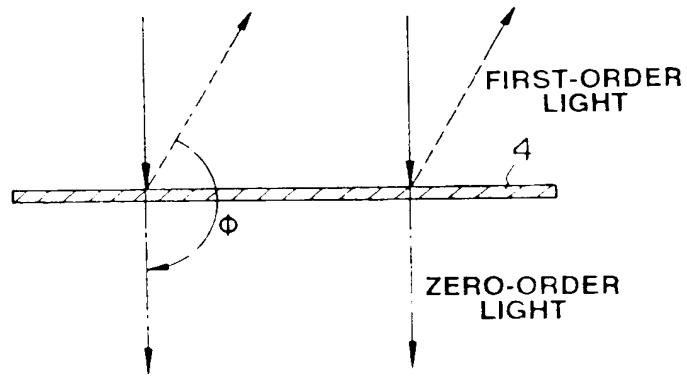
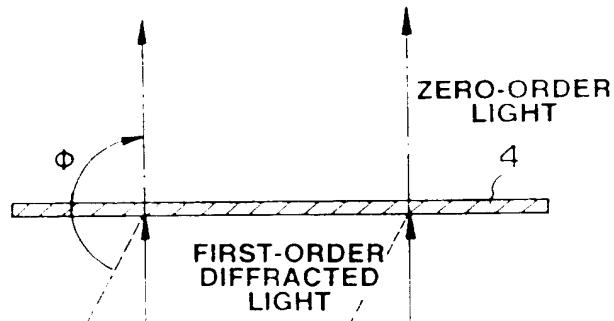


FIG.3(c)



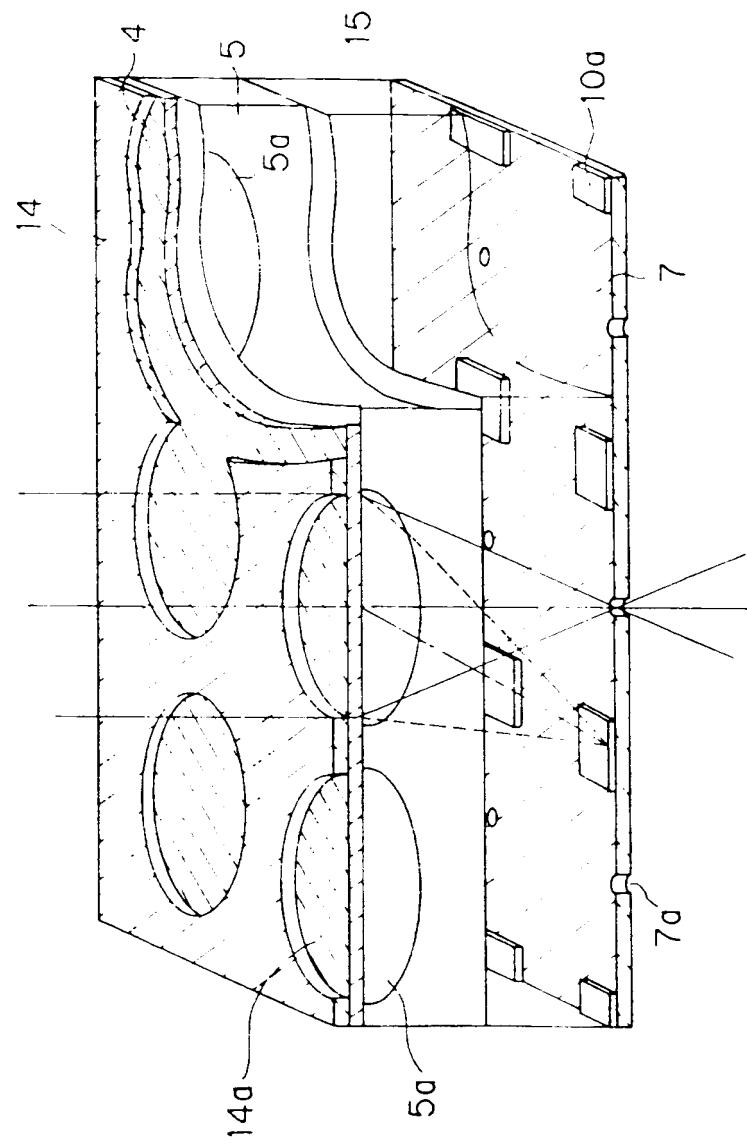


FIG.4

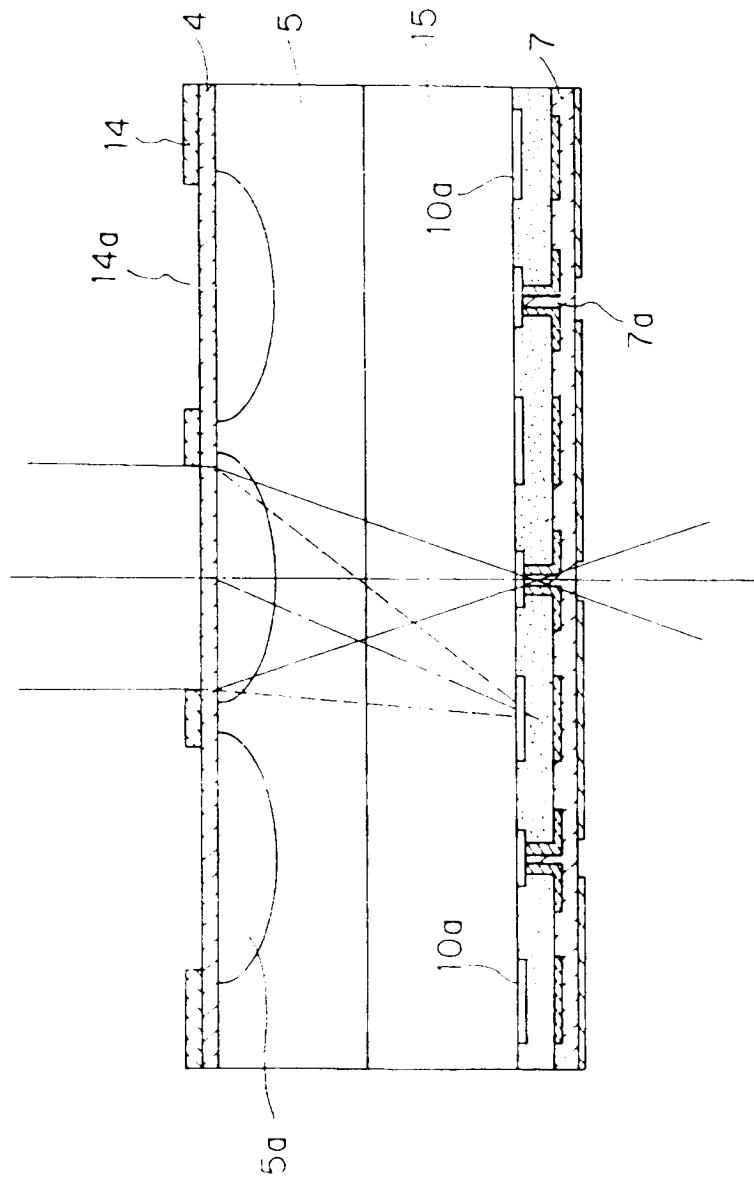


FIG.5

FIG. 6(a)

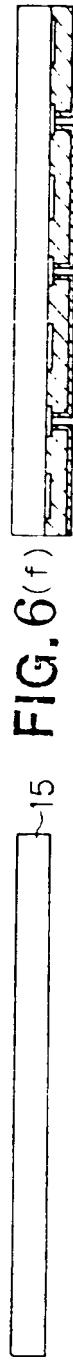


FIG. 6(f)



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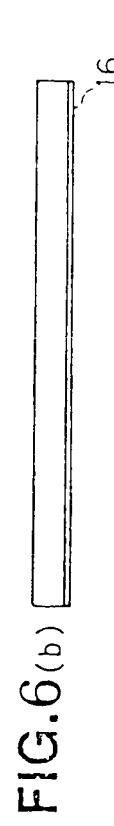


FIG. 6(g)



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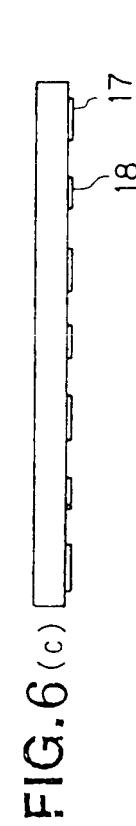


FIG. 6(h)



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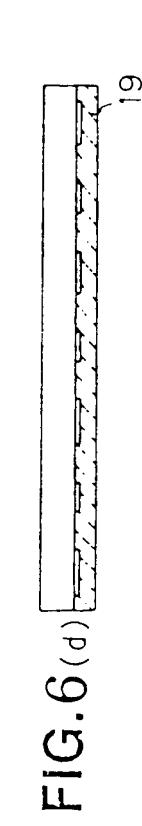


FIG. 6(i)



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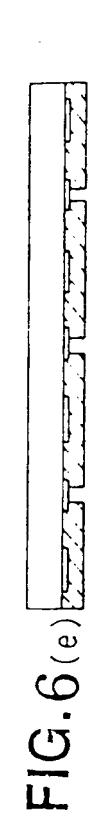
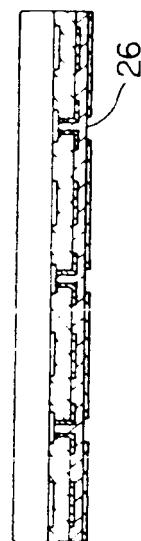
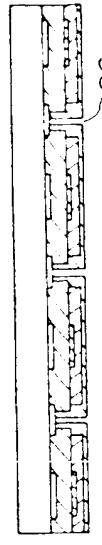
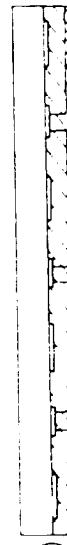


FIG. 6(j)



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FIG. 8(b)

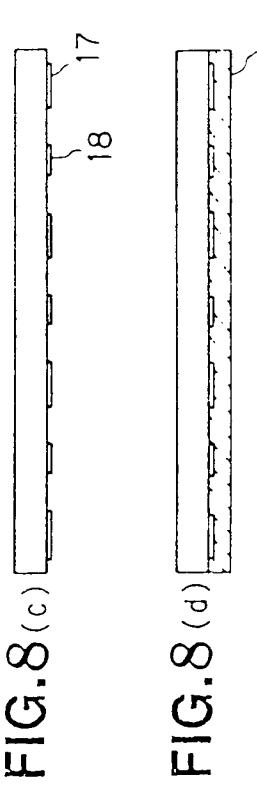


FIG. 8 (d)

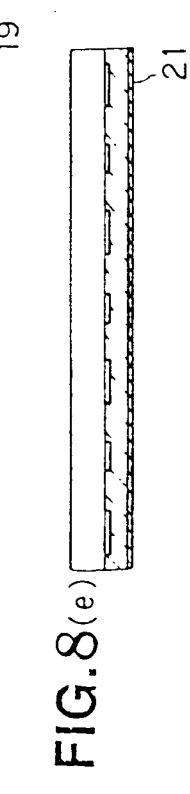


FIG. 8(j)



FIG. 8(f)



FIG. 8(g)

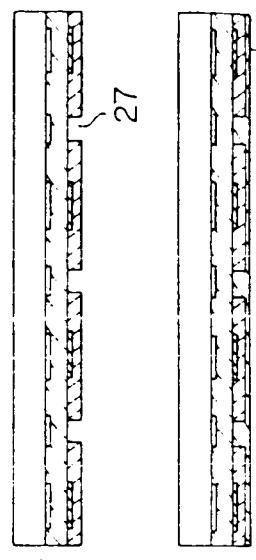
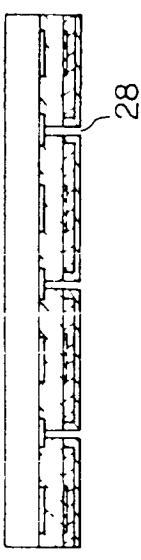


FIG. 8(i)



A technical diagram showing a cross-section of a double-walled structure. The outer wall is a thick, rectangular block with a central cavity. Inside this cavity, there are two smaller, parallel rectangular blocks. The entire assembly is labeled 'FIG. 8(j)'.

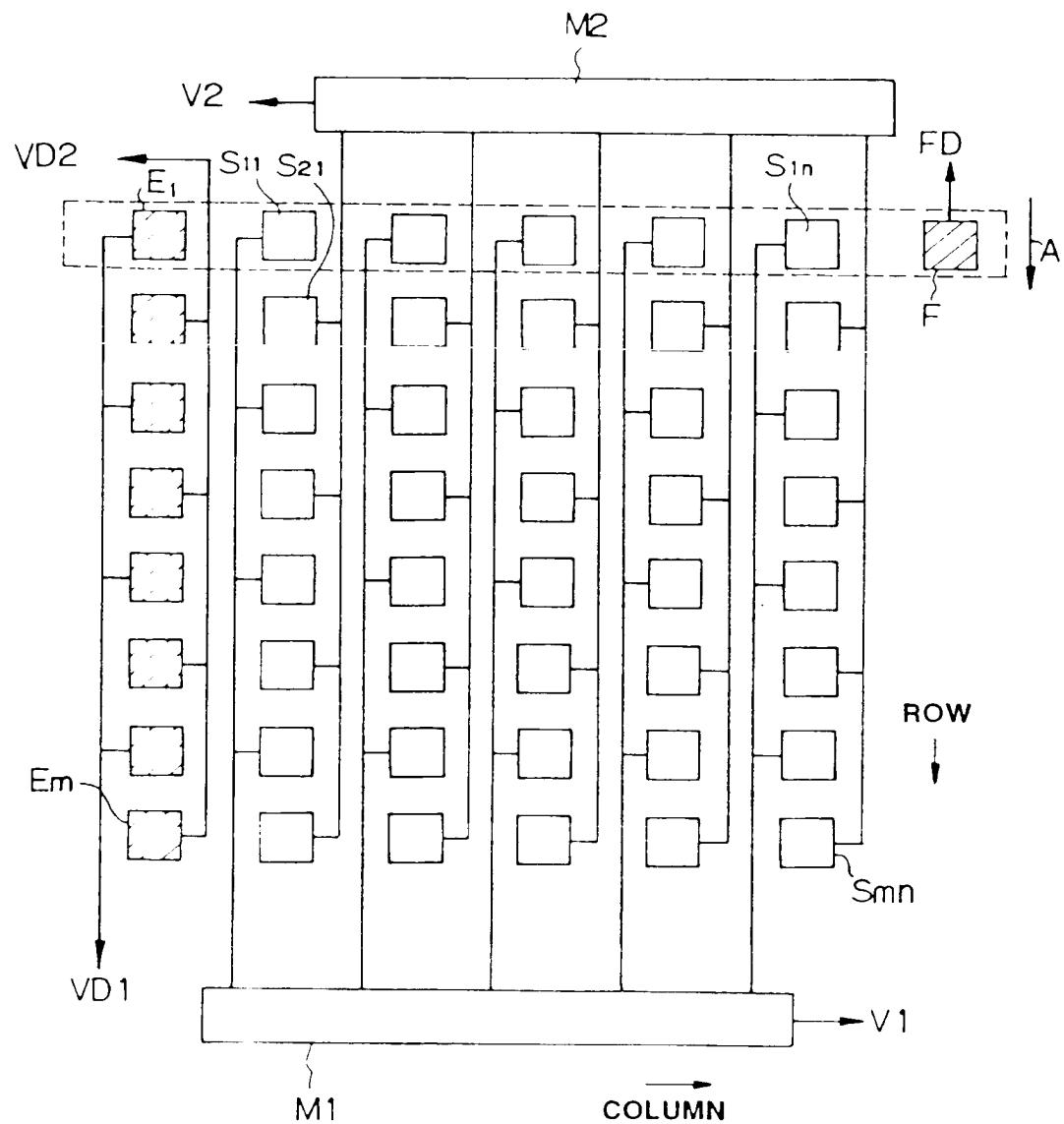


FIG 9

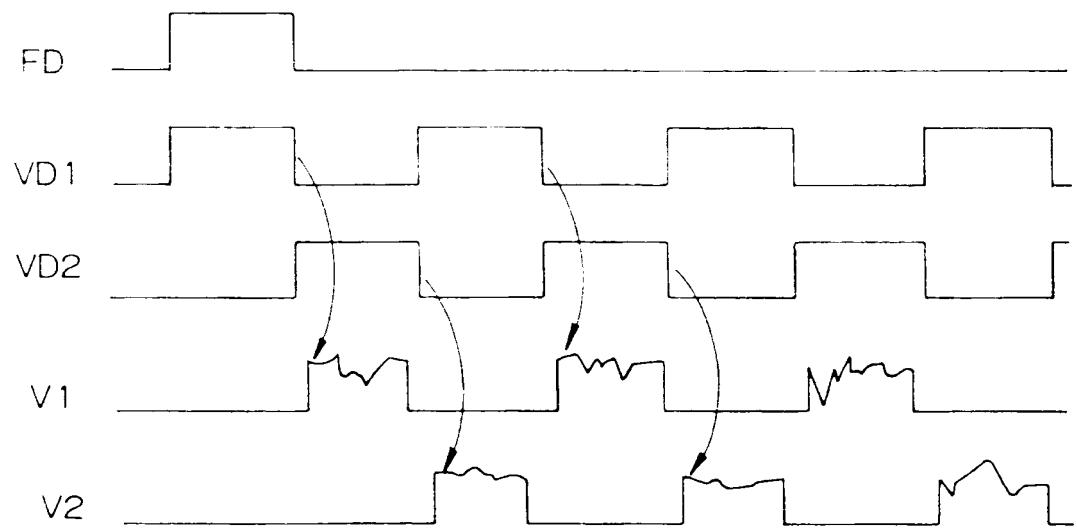


FIG.10

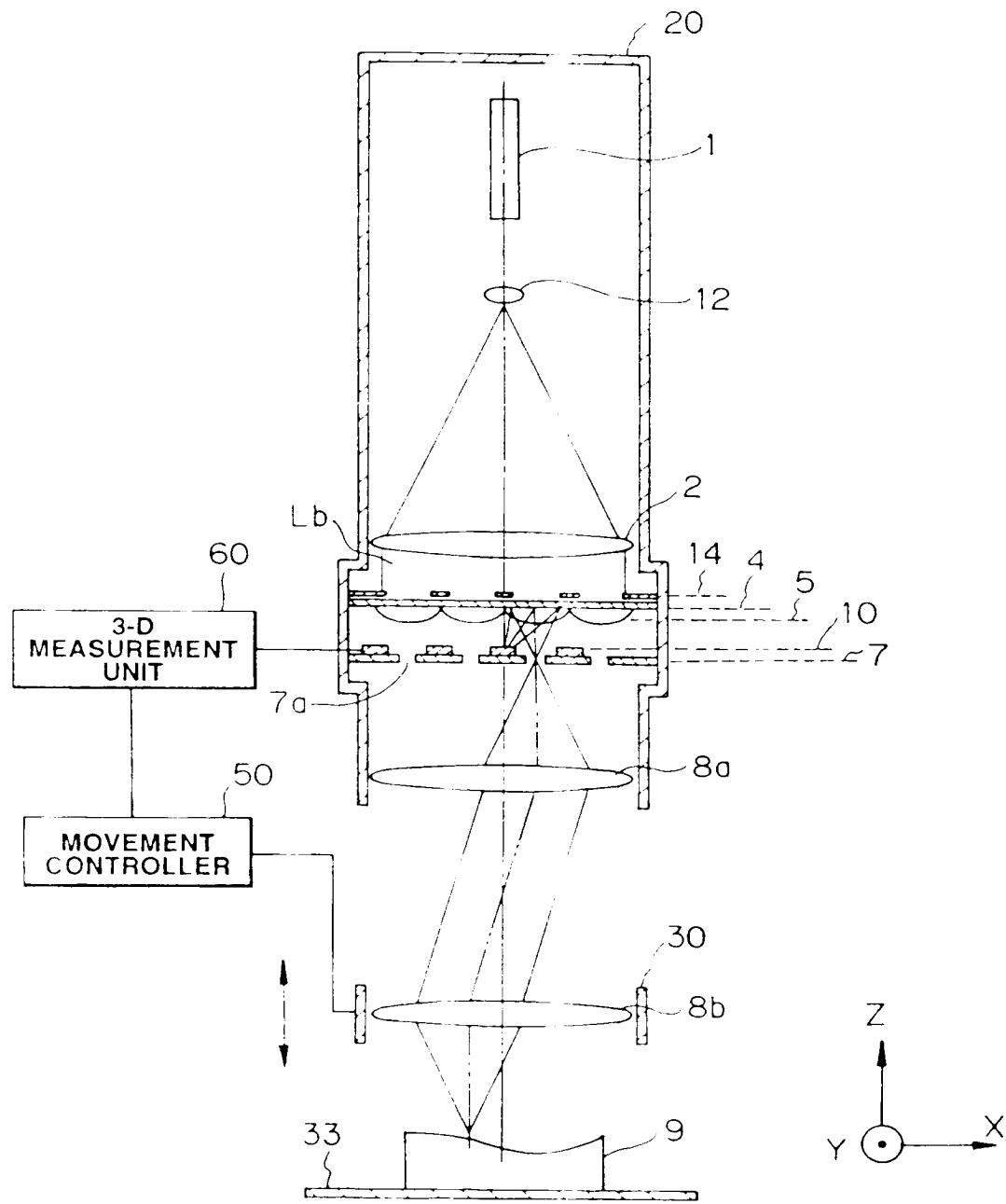


FIG.

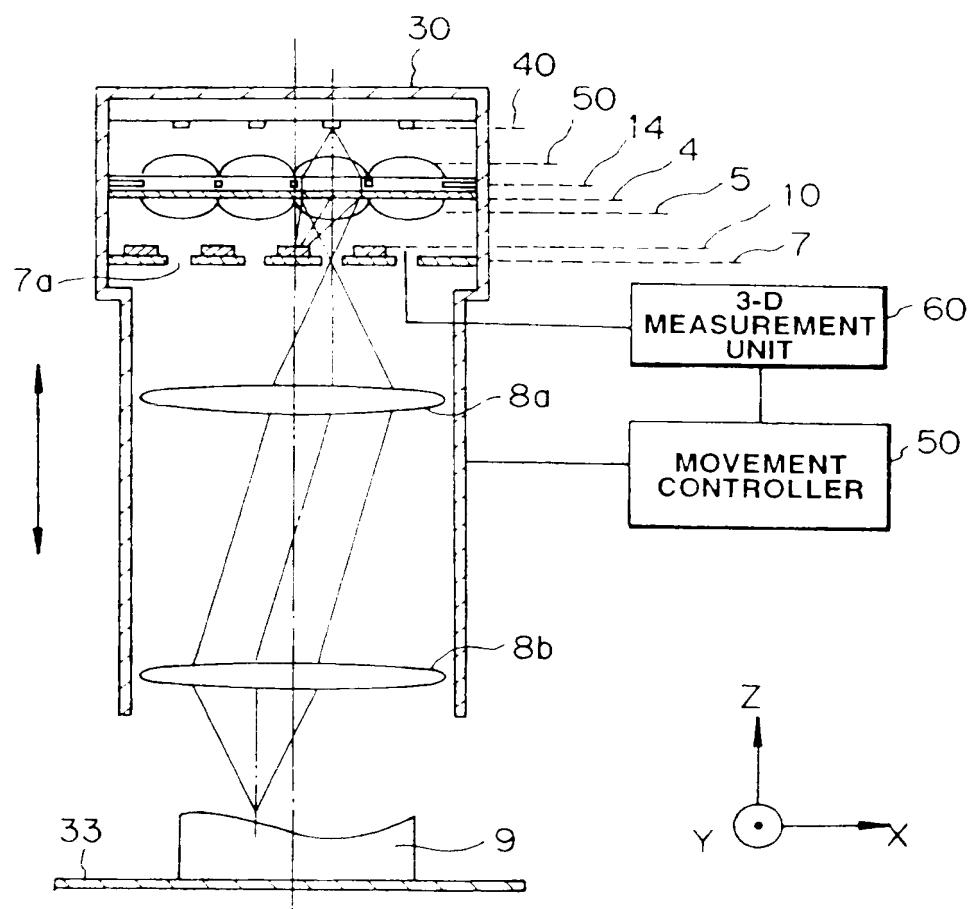


FIG.12

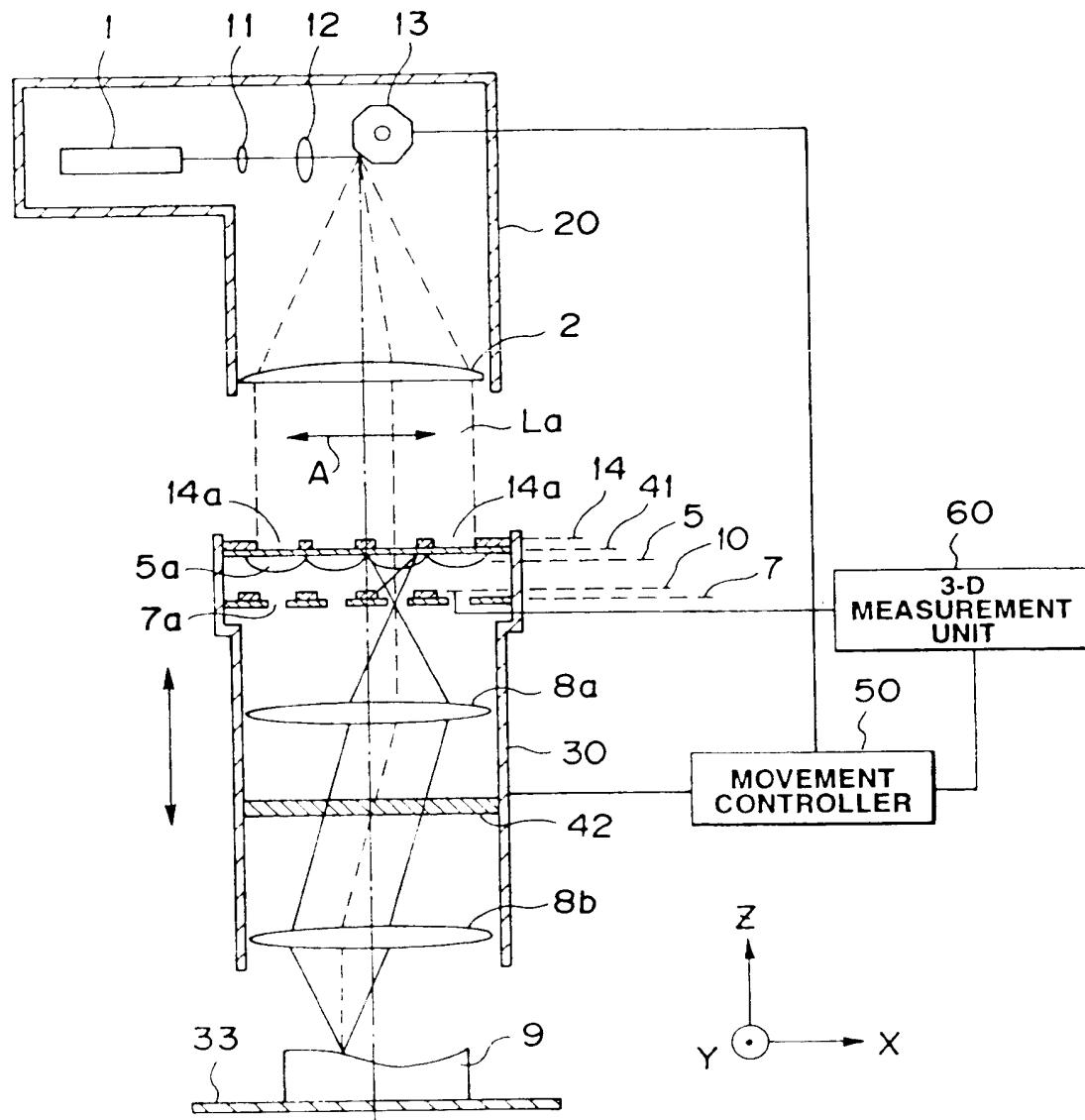


FIG 12

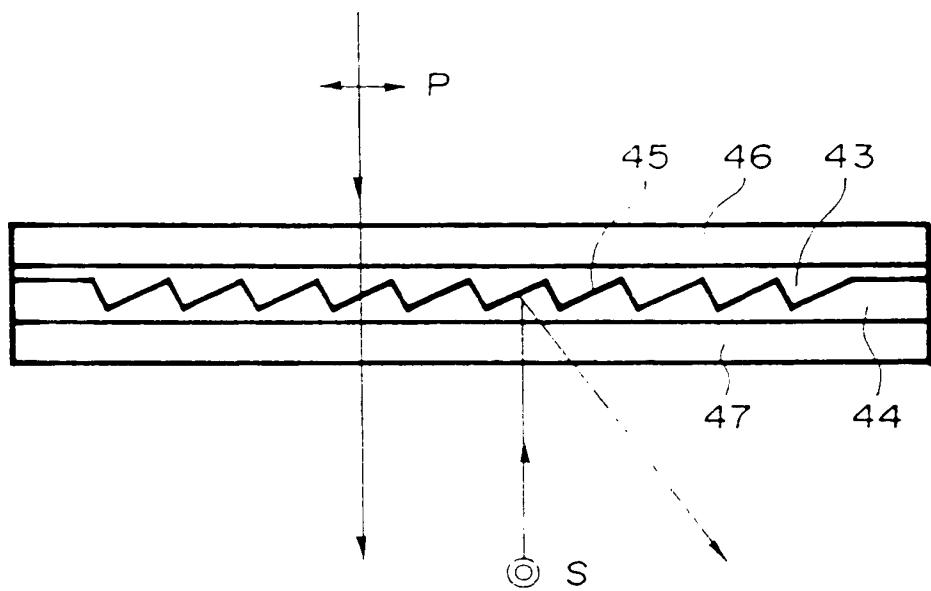


FIG.14

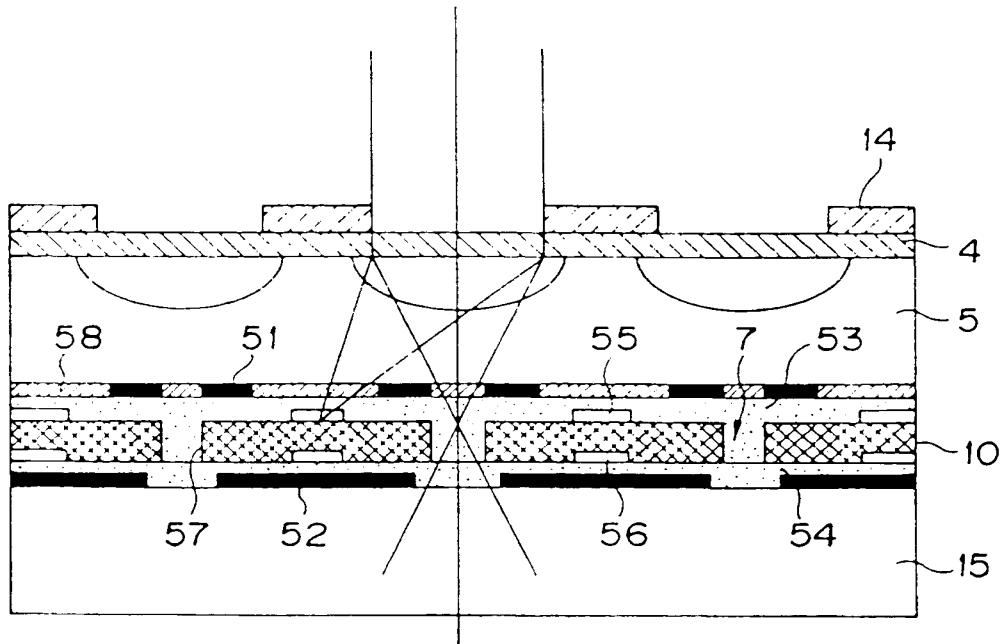
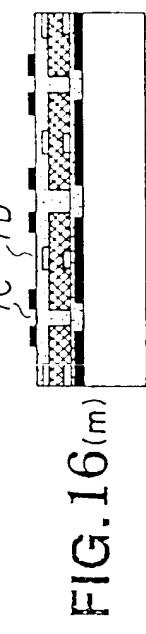
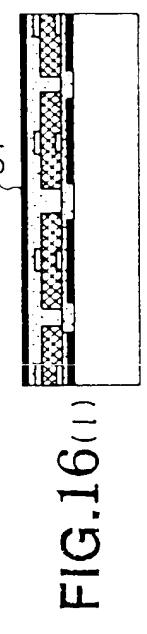
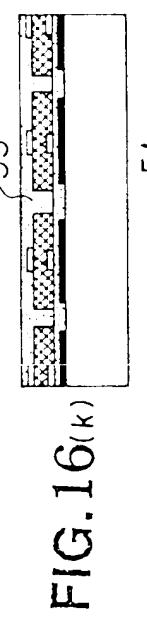
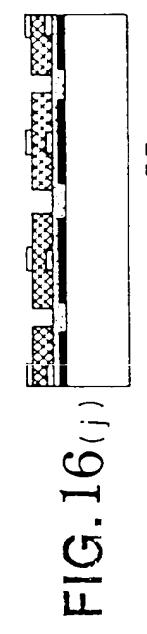
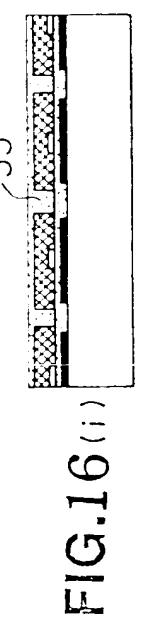
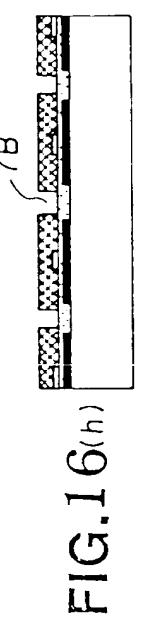
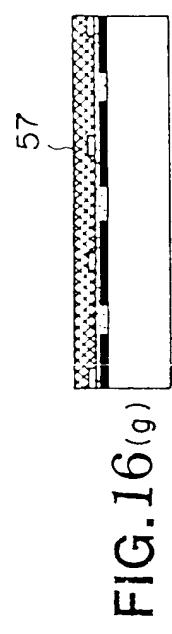
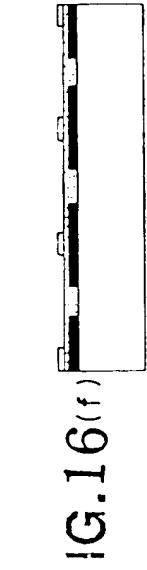
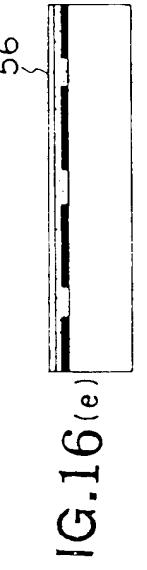
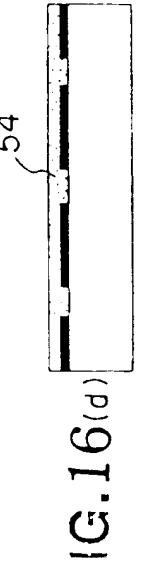
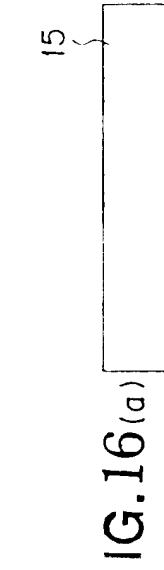


FIG.15



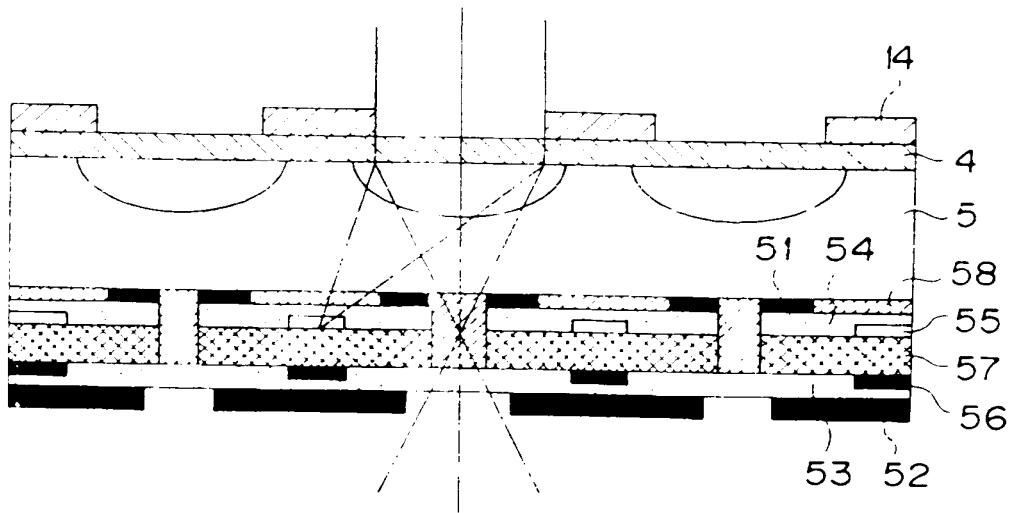


FIG.17

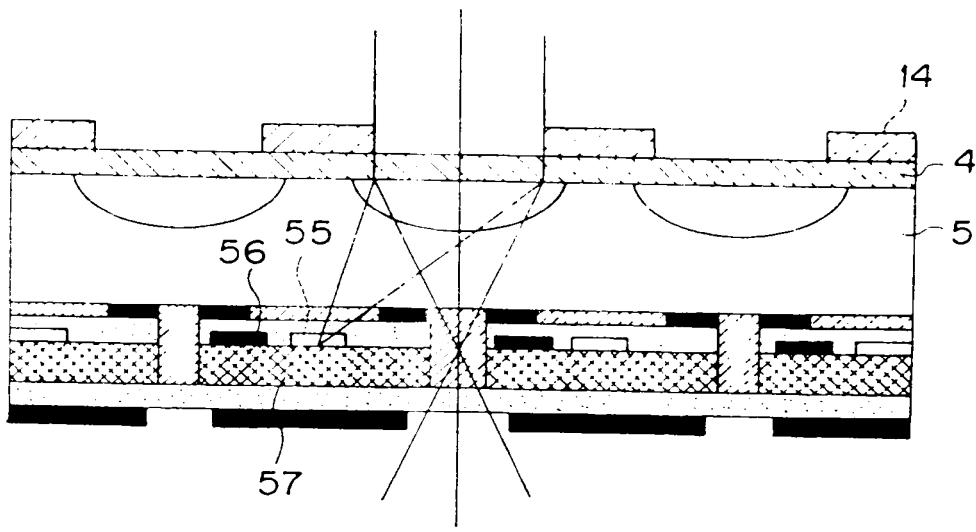


FIG.18

FIG.19 (a)

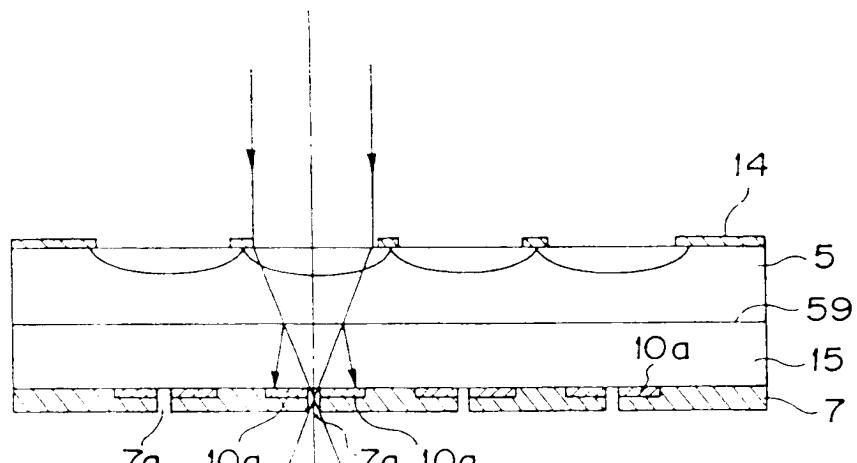
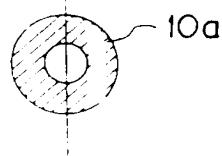


FIG.19 (b)



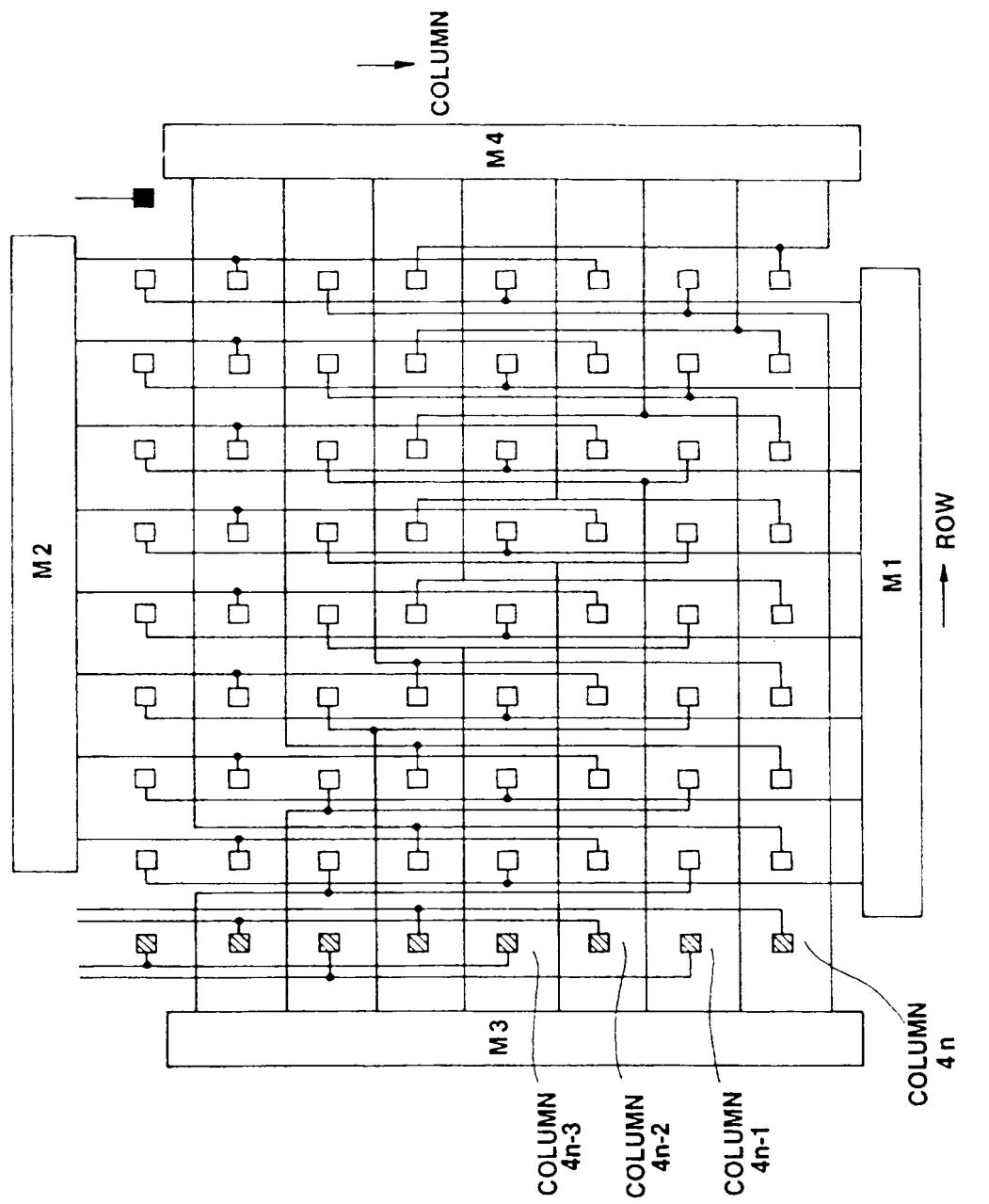


FIG.20

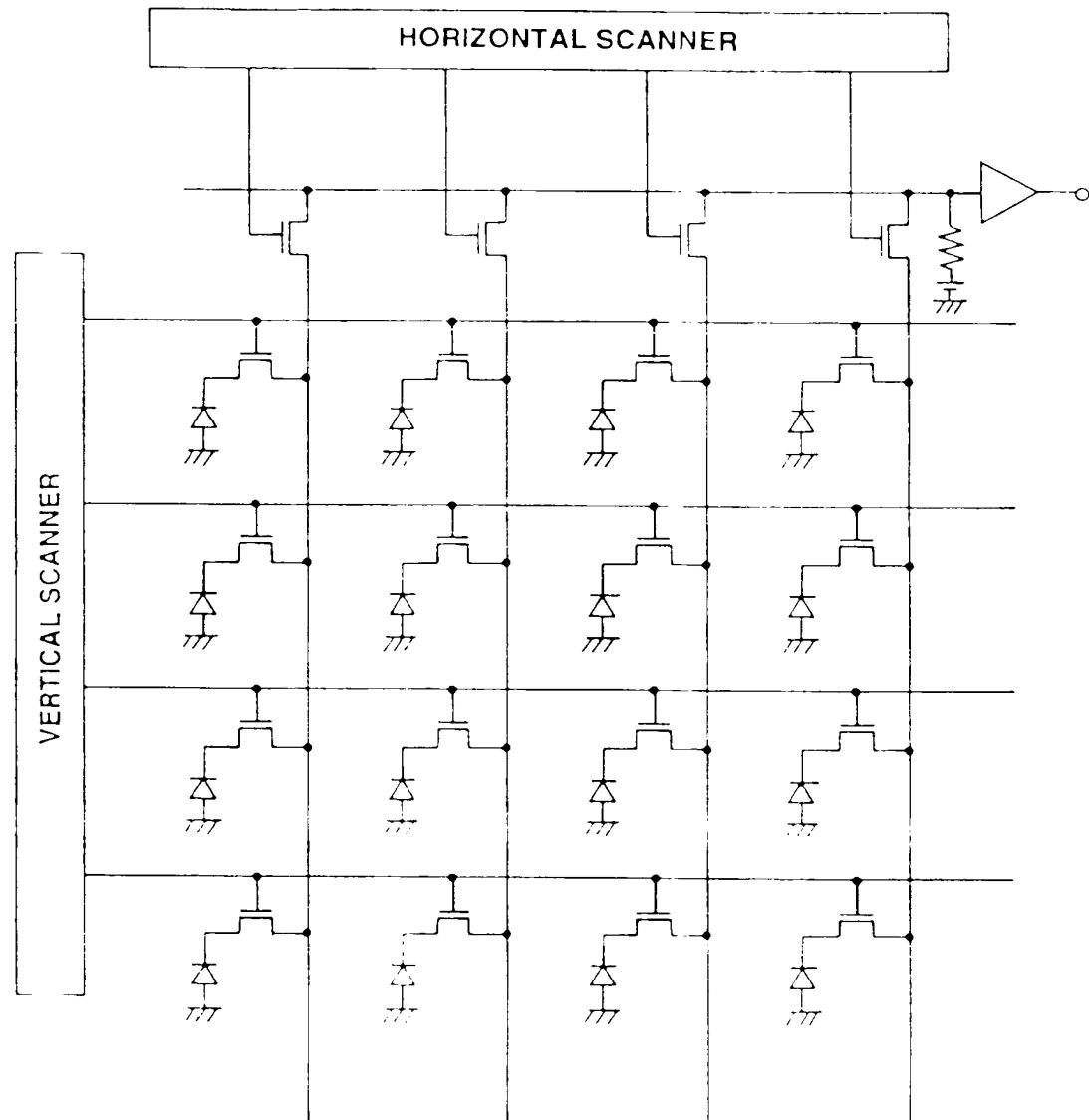


FIG. 21

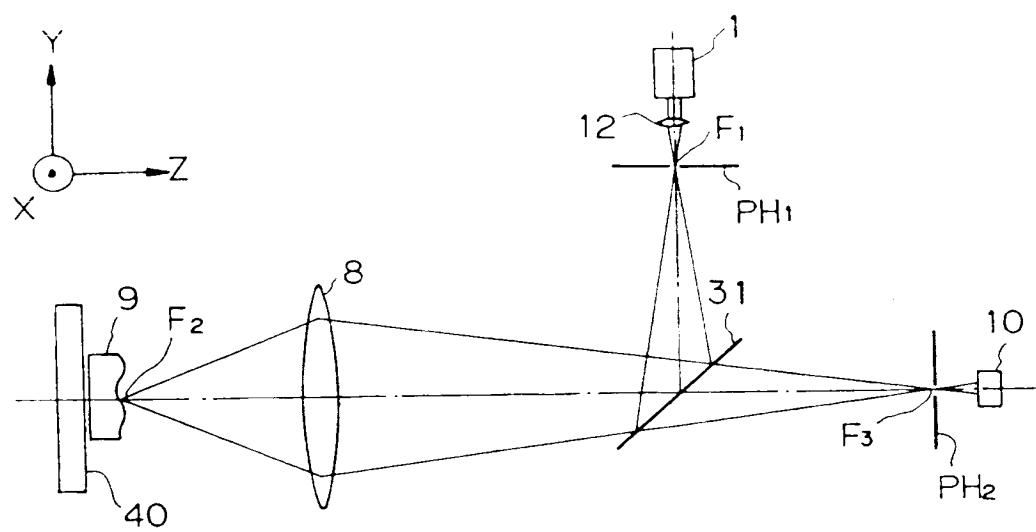


FIG.22

FIG. 23(a)

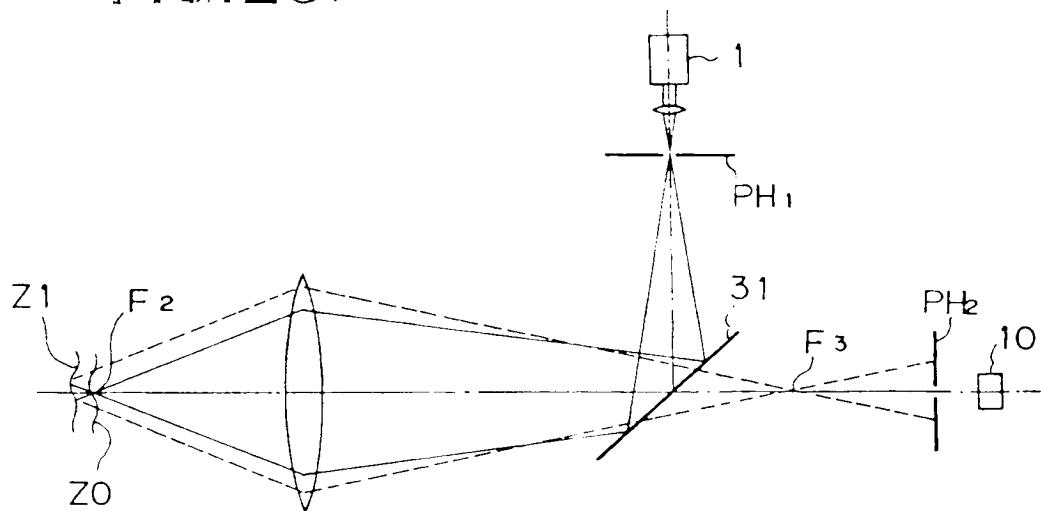
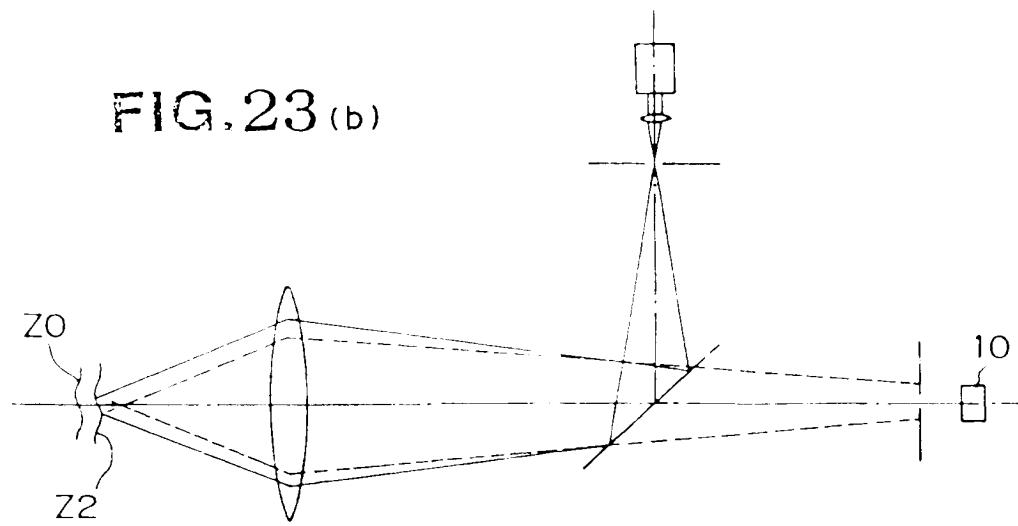


FIG. 23(b)



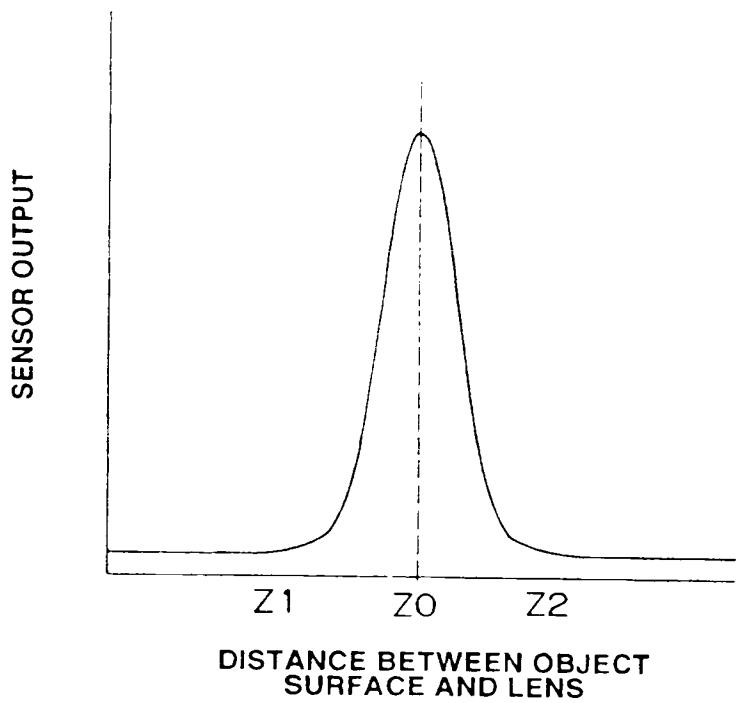


FIG.24

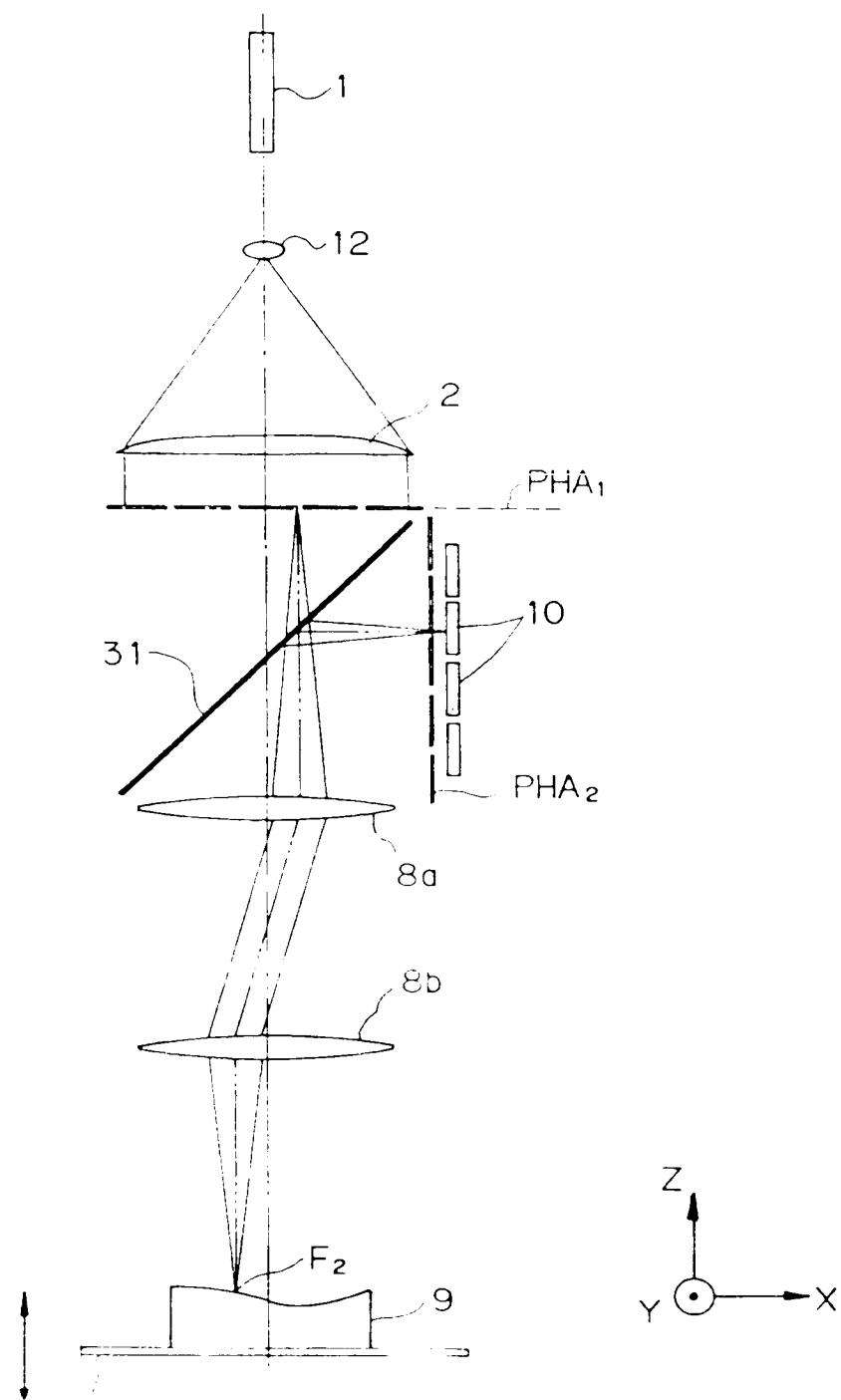


FIG.25

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/JP94/01633

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

Int. Cl⁶ G01B11/24

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

Int. Cl⁵ G01B11/24, G02B21/00

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1971 - 1993
Kokai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1971 - 1993

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	JP, A, 4-357407 (Toshiba Corp.), December 10, 1992 (10. 12. 92), (Family: none)	1-10
A	JP, A, 4-236307 (NEC Corp.), August 25, 1992 (25. 08. 92), (Family: none)	1-10
A	JP, A, 4-42117 (Olympus Optical Co., Ltd.), February 12, 1992 (12. 02. 92), (Family: none)	1-10
A	JP, U, 5-33109 (Yokokawa Electric Co., Ltd.), April 30, 1993 (30. 04. 93), (Family: none)	1-10

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. See patent family annex.

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 - "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed
 - "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
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 - "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
 - "&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search December 8, 1994 (08. 12. 94)	Date of mailing of the international search report January 10, 1995 (10. 01. 95)
Name and mailing address of the ISA/ Japanese Patent Office Facsimile No.	Authorized officer Telephone No.